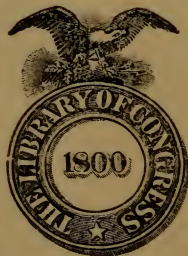


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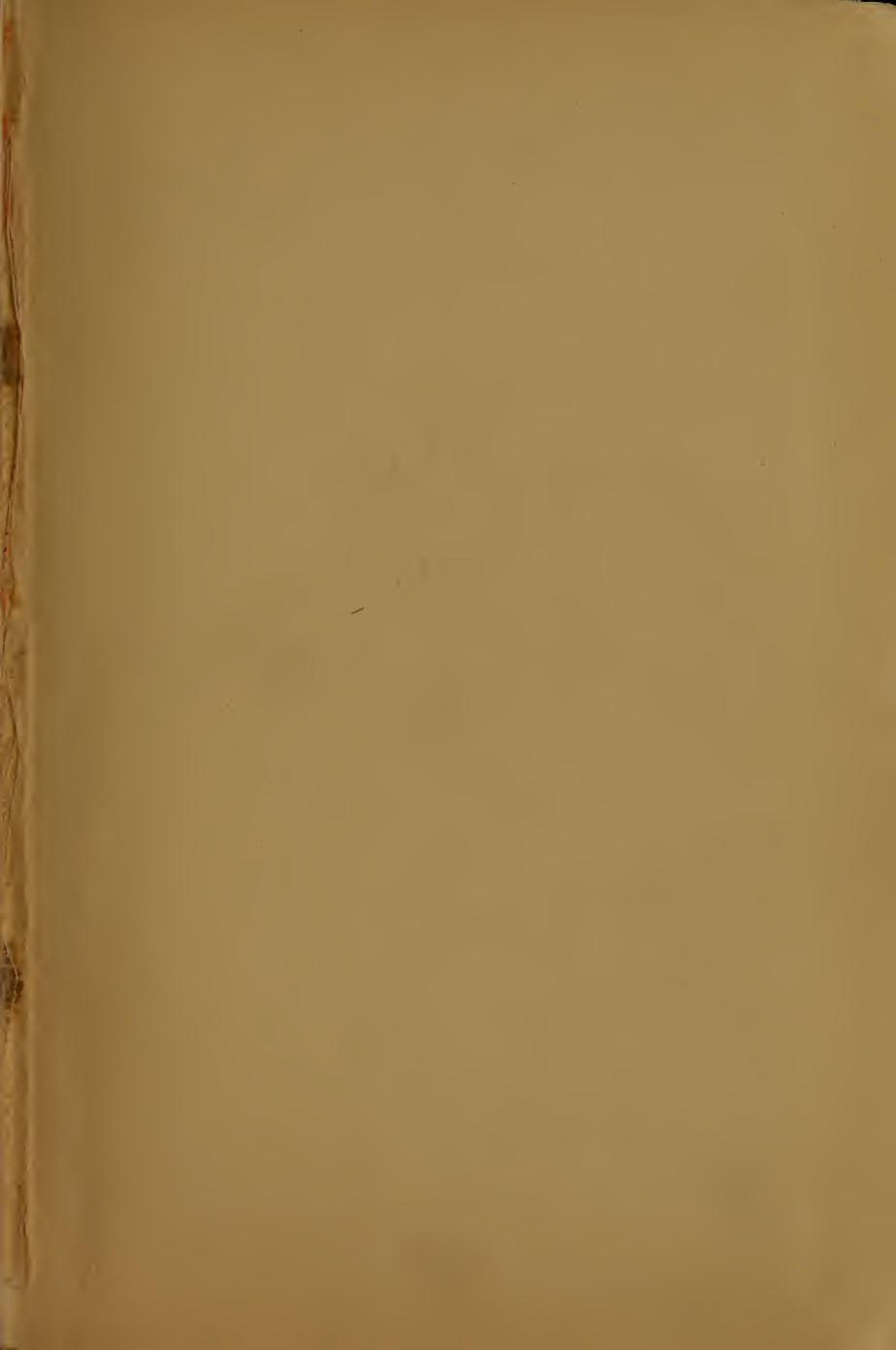


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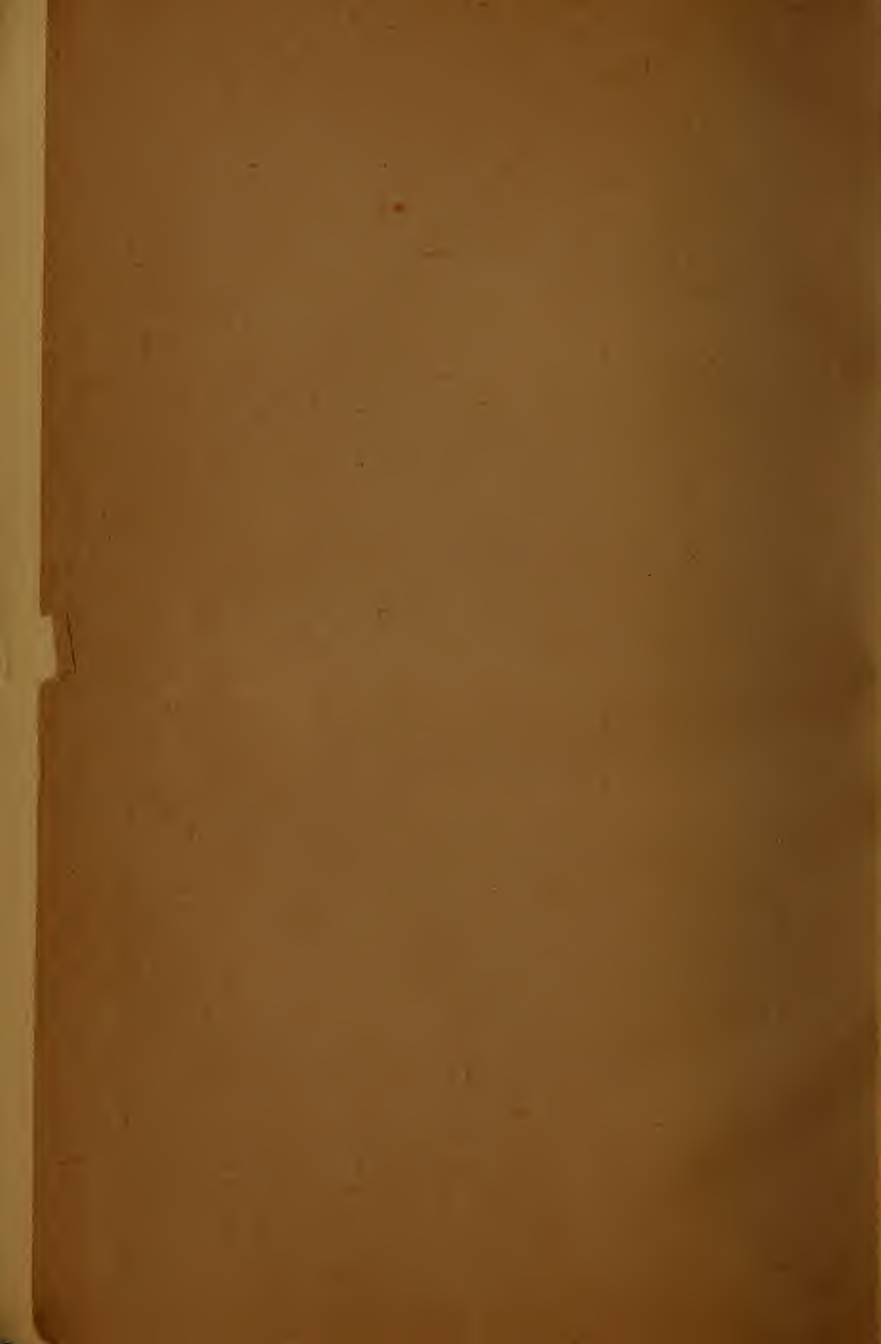


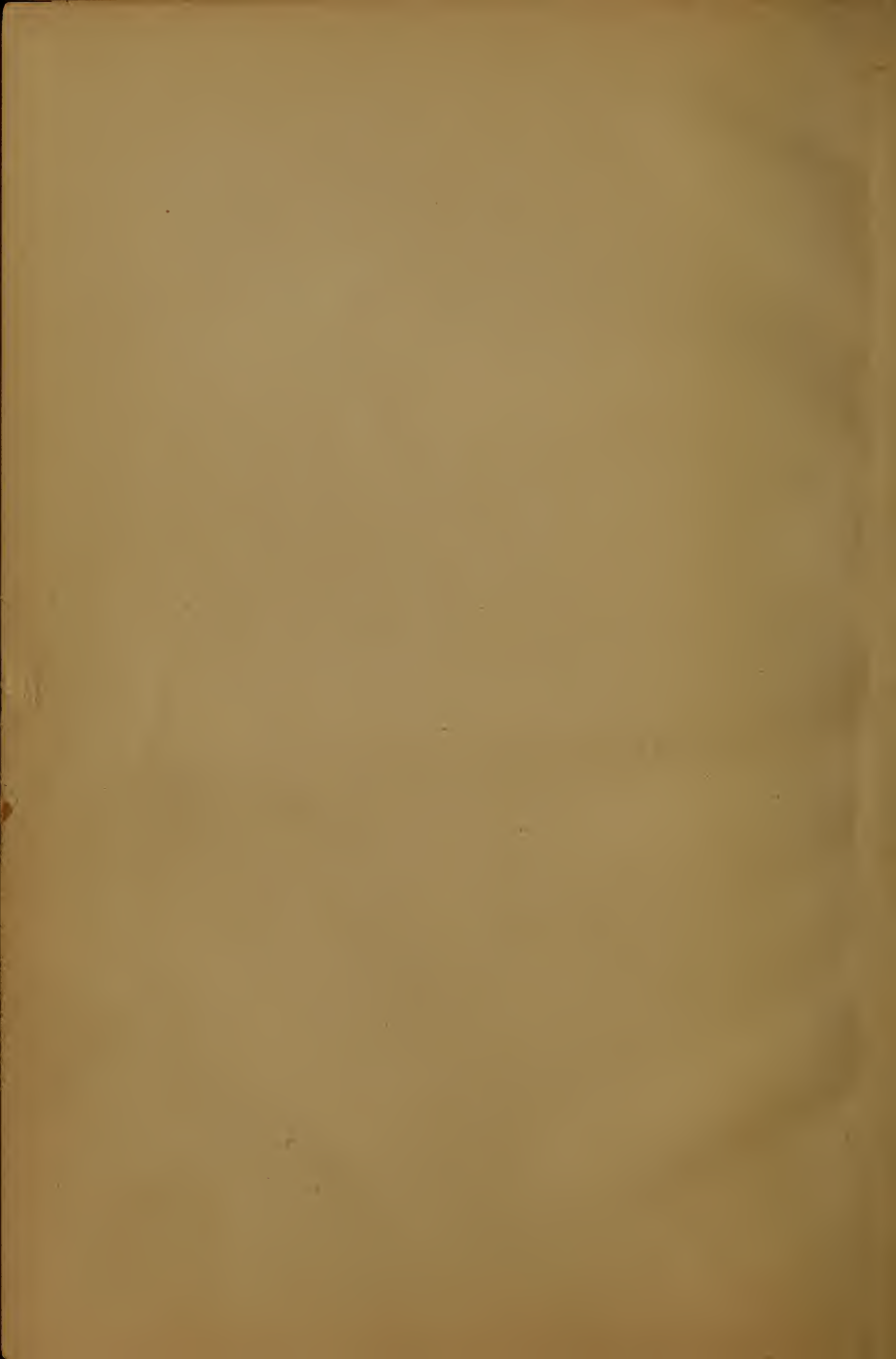
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CLEOPATRA

HENRY HOUSSAYE

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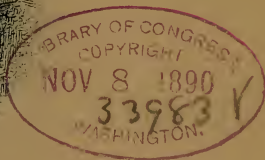
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CLEOPATRA.

I.

AFTER an existence of forty or fifty centuries, the empire of Egypt was expiring under the "evil eye" of the Romans. The Greek dynasty, which had given to the country a new strength and reviving brilliancy, had exhausted itself in debauchery, crimes, and civil wars. It was now sustained only by the good-will of Rome, whose fatal protection was bought at a high price, and who still designed to tolerate, for a time, at least, the independence of Egypt. Freed from nearly all military service by the introduction of Hellenic and Gallic mercenaries the Egyptians had lost their warlike habits. They had suffered so many invasions and submitted to so many foreign dominations that all that remained for patriotism was the religion of their ancestors. Little mattered it to them, born servile and used to despotism, whether

they were governed by a Greek king or a Roman pro-consul — they would give not an ear of corn less, nor receive a blow the more.

Her glory eclipsed and her power decayed, Egypt still possessed her marvelous wealth. Agriculture, manufactures, and commerce poured into Alexandria a triple wave of gold. Egypt had ere while supplied Greece and Asia Minor with corn; it remained the inexhaustible granery of the Mediterranean basin. But the fertile valley of the Nile — “so fertile,” says Herodotus, “that there was no need of the plough,” produced not corn only. Barley, maize, flax, cotton, indigo, the papyrus, henna, with which the women tinted their finger nails, clover sufficient for countless herds of cattle and sheep, onions and radishes, supplied to the laborers employed in building the great pyramid of Cheops to the amount of eight millions of drachms, grapes, dates, figs, and that delicious fruit of the lotus, which, according to Homer, “made one forget his native land,” were other sources of wealth. Native industry produced paper, furniture of wood, ivory, and metal; weapons, carpets, mats, fabrics of linen, wool, and silk; cloths, embroidered and painted; glazed pottery, glass-ware, vases of bronze and alabaster, enamels, jewels of gold and settings of gems. Finally commerce, which had its factories beyond the Aromatic Cape, which sent its caravans across Arabia and the Lybian Desert, and whose countless ships ploughed the seas from the Pillars of Hercules to the mouth of the Indus, had made Alexandria the emporium of the three continents. Under Ptolemy XI., the father of Cleopatra, the taxes,

tithes, import and export duties cast annually into the royal treasury twelve thousand five hundred talents — sixty-eight millions of francs.

The capital of the Ptolemies, Alexandria, made Achilles Tatius exclaim, "We are conquered," and the probability is that he saw this city only after the ruin of many of its fine edifices. But what at all times was most striking to the stranger was less the number and magnificence of the buildings than the noble order and symmetrical arrangement of the city. Two great avenues, bordered with colonnades of marble and crossing at right angles, traverse Alexandria — the longitudinal avenue, more than thirty stadia (four thousand eight hundred meters) in length, and thirty-five meters in width, ran from east to west, beginning at the gate of the Necropolis and terminating at the Canopic gate. The transverse avenue extended for a length of seventeen stadia, from the southern enclosure to the great port. All the other streets and avenues, alike paved with heavy blocks of stone and provided with sidewalks, all crossing at right angles, met the two chief thoroughfares. This regularity, this noble appearance, and endless perspectives gave to Alexandria a character peculiar to itself. One felt that, unlike other cities which grow by degrees, by successive additions, Alexandria had been created at one stroke, on a fixed plan; and in truth this city had, so to speak, risen from the sand at the will of Alexander. It was Alexander who determined the position of the city; it was Alexander who had given it the form of the Macedonian chlamys; it was Alexander who, with his architect Dinarchus, had

traced this network of streets and avenues, marked out the dykes to be raised for the new port, and appointed the sites for the principal edifices. Afterwards the Ptolemies adorned the city; they built innumerable monuments, created wonderful gardens; populous suburbs arose, both east and west; but as a whole Alexandria remained as it was conceived by Alexander.

It was from the Paneum, an artificial elevation in the heart of the city thirty-five meters in height, that a complete panorama of Alexandria could be seen. On the south, thousands of houses and private palaces stretched away to the circumference which, owing to the perspective, seemed to bathe in the shining waters of Lake Maratis. Humble cottages, rough-coated with lime, pierced irregularly with little windows, having wooden gratings, and terraced roofs surrounded by ventilators, serving as sleeping-places in the hot summer nights, alternated with vast residences rising amidst courts and gardens, concealing from the view of the outside world by lofty walls, turreted like ramparts, their white façades and sculptured porticos with rows of painted columns and cornices decorated with many colored bands. The grand Serapium overlooked this whole portion. This colossal edifice was reached by a winding staircase of a hundred steps; columns of syenite of the Corinthian order, thirty-two meters in height, supported the cupola.

Looking towards the sea the view embraced the northern portions, the old port and the new separated from each other by a gigantic mole seven stadia in extent

which united the island of Pharos with the city. At the eastern extremity of this island rose the lighthouse, an immense octagon tower of two stories, one hundred and eleven meters in height, and built wholly of white marble. Around the vast port, from Cape Lochias to the Heptastadium, extended a noble line of piers along which arose palaces and temples. Edifices of pure Greek style stood side by side with Egyptian buildings and other magnificent ones in which both styles of architecture had combined their elements, relieving the utter plainness of Semitic art by ornaments of the Hellenic order, alternating Corinthian columns with campaniform, and uniting the acanthus leaf with the papyrus flower. Perspectives of cloisters ended in apses of marble exedræ; at the extremity of long avenues of sphinxes gigantic pylons raised their pyramidal masses, where painted on white screens filed on processions of figures, and the entablature of which bore the emblematic disk with the great wings unfolded. Here a Greek temple presented a pediment sculptured in Parian marble; there an Egyptian temple, vast, squat, mysterious, showed its granite mass whose quadrangular pillars bore on the four faces of their cubic capitals the head of the god Hathor. On terraces covered with beds of roses, and shaded by sycamores, mimosas, and palms, rose palaces surrounded by porticos supported by columns of lotus form, alleys of pylons, pavilions in the form of conic towers, open kiosks, tribunes supported by caryatides. In the squares, at the junction of the streets, before the great edifices arose sculptured heads

of Mercury, Osirian colossi, statues of the Greek gods, altars, heroums, dominated at intervals by lofty obelisks and tall masts fixed in the ground whose many colored flags fluttered in the breeze.

Among these endless monuments would first be noticed, at the extremity of the cape, the temple of Isis Lochias, and a noble royal villa; then before the Closed Port of the Kings the shipyards and the arsenal buildings. There began the Bruchium. Enclosed by lofty walls and hanging gardens the Bruchium was a city within the city—the City of the Ptolemies. Each of the Lagidæ had built a palace, erected a temple, opened gushing fountains, planted groves of acacias and sycamores, created ponds where bloomed water-lilies, and the blue lotus flower. Strabo applied to the monuments of the Bruchium the line of the Odyssey: “One produces the other.” Near the various palaces of the kings and their vast appurtenances arose the temple of Chronos, the temple of Isis Pelusia, the lesser Serapium, the temple of Poseidon [Neptune], the gymnasium with its porticos of a stadium in extent, the theater, the covered gallery, the library containing seven hundred thousand volumes.

Finally the Soma, the immense mausoleum in which Alexander’s body rested in a coffin of solid gold, afterwards replaced by one of glass. One other edifice of the Bruchium attracted the eye by its vast proportions and its epistyle crowned by a dome. It was the celebrated museum of Alexandria, at once a school, a monastery, and an academy.

Grammarians, poets, philosophers, and astronomers lived there together at the expense of the Ptolemies, and it was maliciously called the Cage of the Muses,—a splendid cage, however, in which sang Theocritus, Callimachus, Apollonius, and whence arose the noble voice of the Alexandrian philosophy.

Beyond the temple of Poseidon the quays inflected in a broken line towards the southwest. There also edifice succeeded to edifice—the exchange, the temple of Bendis, the temple of Arsinoë, and the immense Apostasia in which was gathered the merchandise of the whole world. Beyond the Heptastadium was the old port with its great shipbuilding yards, and farther to the west, outside the walls, the suburb of the Necropolis, the funeral quarter of the embalmers.





II.

ALEXANDRIA was a cosmopolitan city. Whilst the cities of Upper Egypt and Heptanomis had preserved the national character, in the Delta the Hellenic civilization had been grafted on the Egyptian, or rather they went side by side. The laws and decrees were written in both languages; the priesthood, the government, the police, the tribunals, the whole administration belonged equally to both; the army was composed of Greek and Gallic mercenaries, of Cilician robbers, of fugitive Roman slaves. In Alexandria, where for more than two centuries unnumbered colonies had settled, the native race dwelt together in the ancient Egyptian city of Rhakotis, but they composed at the most only one-third of the population. The Jews, who inhabited a distinct quarter where they had their ethnarch and their Sanhedrim, were in the proportion of one to three. From the Pharos to the Serapium, from the gate of the Necropolis to the Canopic gate were seen as many foreigners as Egyptians. They composed a noisy and variegated

crowd of Greeks, Jews, Syrians, Italians, Arabs, Illyrians, Persians, and Phenicians. In the streets and on the wharves every language was spoken, in the temples every god was worshiped. Into this Babel each race brought its own passions. The population of Alexandria, which amounted to three hundred and twenty thousand exclusive of the slaves, was as turbulent as that of the other Egyptian cities was tranquil and resigned, and during the reigns of the latter Lagidæ the Alexandrian populace always seconded the revolutions of the palace, hoping under new sovereigns to find more liberty and less taxes.

Ptolemy XI. (Auletes) died in July, 51 B. C. He left four children. By his will he appointed to succeed him on the throne his eldest daughter Cleopatra and his eldest son Ptolemy, and according to the custom of Egypt the brother was to marry the sister. At her father's death Cleopatra was sixteen and Ptolemy thirteen years old. The tutor of young Ptolemy, the eunuch Pothinus, was an ambitious man, and, being complete master of the mind of his pupil, he calculated to rule Egypt under the new reign; but he soon found that Cleopatra would permit neither him nor Ptolemy to govern the kingdom. Proud and headstrong, Cleopatra was likewise skillful, intelligent, and very learned; she spoke eight or ten languages, among them Egyptian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac. How is it possible to think that this woman, so haughty and so gifted, would abandon her share of the sovereignty in favor of a child governed by a eunuch? Either she would get rid of her brother, or if she con-

sented to live with the young king she would soon acquire an absolute supremacy over him. Pothinus realized this, and he devoted all his energies to accomplish the ruin of the queen. He began by provoking jealousies among the ministers and the high officers of the crown; then, when the dissension between the partisans of the king and those of Cleopatra was at its height he aroused the people of Alexandria against the young queen. He accused her of desiring to reign alone, even should she have to call in the armed intervention of the Romans. He declared that she had made this plan in conjunction with the eldest son of the great Pompey, Cn. Pompey, who, on his way through Alexandria in 49, had then become her lover. The riot reached even to the gates of the palace, and the connivance of Pothinus and the young king could not escape the perspicacity of Cleopatra. She quitted Alexandria, accompanied by a few faithful attendants. The fugitive, however, did not regard herself as vanquished; she would not so easily renounce that crown which she had already worn for three years. It was soon known that Cleopatra had raised an army on the confines of Egypt and Arabia, and that she was marching on Pelusium. The young king collected his forces and advanced to meet her.

The brother and sister, the husband and wife, were face to face with their armies in the neighborhood of Pelusium when the illustrious victim of Pharsalia came to seek an asylum in Egypt. Pompey supposed he might reckon on the gratitude of the children of Ptolemy Auletes, for it was at his instigation that

seven years previously Gabienus, pro-consul of Syria, had replaced that king on his throne. It is true that after the battle of Pharsalia Pompey was helpless and Cæsar all powerful, and in assisting a fugitive from whom nothing more could be hoped for, the anger of Cæsar might be provoked. Pothinus and the other ministers of the young king did not hesitate; they welcomed Pompey; but it was to murder him as soon as he set foot on Egyptian territory. His head, embalmed with the learned art of the Egyptians, was presented to Cæsar when the latter, who was pursuing Pompey, landed at Alexandria. Cæsar turned his eyes from the ghastly trophy, and warmly reproached Pothinus and Achillas with their crime. Doubtless the two wretches cared but little for his reproaches; they considered that they had done Cæsar a great service in ridding him of his most powerful adversary, and they knew enough of mankind to understand that, Pompey being dead, it was easy for Cæsar to be magnanimous.

Cæsar soon learned the contentions of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the flight of the latter in consequence of the threats of the populace, and the battle about to take place between the two armies assembled at Pelusium. It had always been the Roman policy to intermeddle in the private dissensions of nations. This policy of intervention was still more in order for Cæsar with regard to Egypt, because during his first consulate Ptolemy Auletes had been declared the ally of Rome, and in his will had conjured the Roman people to have his last wishes executed. Another motive, which he does not mention in his "Commentaries," induced

Cæsar to intermeddle in the affairs of Egypt. With little expense he had made himself the creditor of the late king, and he had to call upon the heirs for a large amount. This was no less than seven millions fifty thousand sesterces which remained due of the thirty-three thousand talents which Ptolemy had promised to pay Cæsar and Pompey if by the assistance of the Romans he should recover his crown.

Pothinus, however, thought he had done enough for Cæsar in offering him the head of Pompey. He urged him, therefore, to reëmbark and to go whither he was called by much more important matters than the disputes of Ptolemy and Cleopatra: to Pontus, whence Pharnaces was driving his lieutenant Domitius, to Rome where Cœlius was exciting the plebeians. To the claims of Cæsar, he replied that the treasury was empty; to his offers of arbitration between the heirs of Ptolemy, he objected that it was not proper for a foreigner to interfere in this quarrel, that such an interference would rouse all Egypt. In support of his words, he reminded him that the people of Alexandria, regarding the fasces borne before Cæsar as an outrage on the royal dignity, were enraged at it; that daily new riots arose, that every night Roman soldiers were assassinated, that the Alexandrian population was very numerous, and that the army of Cæsar (numbering only three thousand two hundred legionaries and eight hundred cavalry) was very small.

But his refusals, his counsels, his implied menaces availed nought against the will of Cæsar. His prayers exhausted, he commands. Pothinus is ordered formally

to invite in his name Ptolemy and Cleopatra to disband their armies and to present themselves before his consular tribunal to settle their differences. The eunuch was forced to yield, but, as cunning as Cæsar was persistent, he hoped to turn this intervention, which he at first dreaded, to secure the success of his designs. With this purpose he sent to Cleopatra Cæsar's command to disband her troops, but without telling her she was expected at Alexandria, and he wrote to Ptolemy to repair at once to Cæsar but still to keep his soldiers under arms. Pothinus calculated by these means to free himself from Cleopatra's army and to secure to the young king the favor of Cæsar, since Ptolemy alone of the two heirs of Auletes summoned by the consul paid due attention to his invitation. A few days after, Ptolemy actually arrived in Alexandria. He offered to Cæsar the warmest protestations of friendship, in which he was joined by Pothinus, Achillas, and the other ministers; he explained the disputes between himself and Cleopatra, laying all the blame on her. Cæsar, however, was not so easily duped. Pothinus had supposed that the absence of Cleopatra would irritate Cæsar against her, but Cæsar could not believe that the young queen had, through contempt, declined his invitation to repair to Alexandria. He thought it more probable that some machination of Pothinus had prevented her coming. In order to satisfy himself of this he secretly despatched a messenger to Cleopatra, whom he knew to be still at Pelusium.

The queen was waiting impatiently for news from Cæsar. On the receipt of his first message, but

partially transmitted by Pothinus, she had hastened to disband her army. She already felt full confidence in the favor of the great leader who was called "the husband of all women," but she knew that she must see Cæsar, or rather that Cæsar must see her. But the days passed and the invitation to Alexandria did not arrive. Finally the second message reached her, and she learned that Cæsar had already sent for her to go to him, but that Pothinus had taken measures to prevent her knowing it. The thing was plain enough; her enemies were not willing that she should have an interview with Cæsar, and now that their trick was discovered they would employ force; no doubt they were on their guard and laid their plans accordingly. If Cleopatra sought to reach Alexandria by land she would be taken by the outposts of the Egyptian army encamped before Pelusium; by sea, her royal trireme could not escape the vessels of Ptolemy cruising about the entrance to the port. Even should she succeed in reaching Alexandria she would run the risk of being torn to pieces by the populace, incited by Pothinus. Even in the king's palace, where Cæsar resided as the guest of Ptolemy, that is to say with an Egyptian guard of honor, she might be seized and slain by the sentinels.

Cleopatra, abandoning the idea of entering Alexandria with the trappings of a queen, bethought herself of a plan to do so not merely under a disguise, but as a bale of goods. Accompanied by a single devoted attendant, Apollodorus, the Sicilian, she embarked from near Pelusium in a decked bark

which, in the middle of the night, entered the port of Alexandria. They landed at a pier before one of the lesser gates of the palace. Cleopatra enveloped herself in a great sack of coarse cloth of many colors, such as were used by travelers to pack up mats and mattresses, and Apollodorus bound it round with a strap, then taking the sack upon his shoulders, entered the gate of the palace, went straight to the apartments of Cæsar, and laid his precious burden at his feet.

Aphrodite rose radiant from the sea: Cleopatra less pretendingly from a sack; but Cæsar was none the less moved at the surprise and ravished with the apparition. Cleopatra, who was then nineteen, was in the flower of her marvelous and seductive beauty. Dion Cassius calls the queen of Egypt the most beautiful of women, but Plutarch finds one epithet insufficient to depict her, and expresses himself thus: "There was nothing so incomparable in her beauty as to compel admiration; but by the charm of her physiognomy, the grace of her whole person, the fascination of her presence, Cleopatra left a sting in the soul." This is her veritable portrait. Cleopatra did not possess supreme beauty, she possessed supreme seductiveness. As Victor Hugo said of a celebrated theatrical character, "She is not pretty, she is worse," which suggestive expression may well apply to Cleopatra. Plutarch adds, and his testimony is confirmed by Dion, that Cleopatra spoke in a melodious voice and with infinite sweetness. This information is valuable in a psychological point of view.

Certes, this charm of voice, divine gift so rarely bestowed, this pure and winning caress, this ever new delight was not one of the least attractions of the Siren of the Nile.

This first interview between Cæsar and Cleopatra probably extended far into the night. It is certain that, with the earliest dawn, Cæsar sent for Ptolemy, and told him he must be reconciled to his sister and associate her in the government. "In one night," says Dion Cassius, "Cæsar had become the advocate of her of whom he had erewhile thought himself the judge." Ptolemy was resisting the thinly disguised commands of the consul, when Cleopatra appearing, the young king, mad with rage, cast his crown at the feet of Cæsar and rushed from the palace uttering the cry: "Treason! treason! to arms!" The mob, excited by his cries, rose and marched on the palace. Cæsar feeling himself too weak to resist (he had but a handful of legionaries about him) ascended one of the terraces and harangued the multitude from a distance. He succeeded in restoring a calm by his promises of satisfying the Egyptians in their demands. Just at this time his legionaries arrived from the camp, surrounded the young prince, separated him from his partisans, and with every mark of respect reinstated him willy-nilly in the palace where he might serve as a hostage for Cæsar. The next day the people were assembled in the public square, and Cæsar, accompanied by Ptolemy and Cleopatra, went thither in great state with his escort of lictors. Every Roman was under arms, ready to suppress the first symptom of

sedition. Cæsar read aloud the testament of Ptolemy Auletes, and declared solemnly in the name of the Roman people that he would insist on carrying out the last will of the late king. By this the two elder of his children were to reign conjointly over Egypt. As for the other two children of the king, he, Cæsar, made them a gift of the island of Cyprus, and handed over to them the sovereignty of it.

This scene overawed the Egyptians; nevertheless, Cæsar, fearing an insurrection, hastened to summon to Alexandria the new legions which he had formed in Asia Minor of the wrecks of Pompey's army. But long before these reënforcements could reach him, the Egyptian army from Pelusium, on secret orders from Pothinus, entered the city to drive out the Romans. At the same time, Arsinoë, the young sister of Cleopatra, assisted by the eunuch Ganymede, made her escape from the palace, and in default of Ptolemy, still Cæsar's prisoner, was received with acclamations both by the army and people as the daughter of the Lagidæ. This army, commanded by Achillas, amounted to eighteen thousand foot and two thousand horse, and the people of Alexandria made with it common cause against the foreigner.

Cæsar had but four thousand soldiers and the crews of his triremes. He was in extreme peril; occupying with this handful of men the palaces of the Bruchium, he was attacked from the city by the troops of Achillas and the armed populace, and his fleet, which was at anchor in the greater harbor, was virtually captive, since the enemy held the passes of Taurus and Hep-

tastadium. He even feared that this inactive fleet might fall into the hands of the Alexandrians, who would have made use of it to intercept his supplies of men and munitions. Cæsar averted this danger by setting fire to his vessels. The immense conflagration reached the quays and destroyed many houses and edifices, among others the arsenal, the library, and the grain emporium. The Egyptians, exasperated, rushed to the attack, but the legionaries, as good diggers as brave soldiers, had transformed the Bruchium into an impregnable entrenched camp. On all sides were embankments, barricades, lines of earthworks; the theater had become a citadel. The Romans sustained twenty assaults without losing an inch of ground. Cæsar even succeeded in seizing the island of Pharos, which gave him the command of the great harbor.

The Egyptians imagined that victory would be theirs if, instead of a woman, they could have Ptolemy to lead them. They therefore sent word to Cæsar that they made war on him only because he kept their king a prisoner, and that as soon as he should be restored to liberty hostilities would cease. Cæsar, who knew the fickleness of the Alexandrians, yielded—he gave them back Ptolemy. As for his accustomed counsellor Pothinus, Cæsar had intercepted letters from him to Achilles, and had delivered him over to the lictors. No sooner had Ptolemy rejoined the Egyptian army than the war, far from ceasing, was renewed with increased vigor. Just then the first reënforcement, the thirty-seventh legion, reached Cæsar by

sea. The war was carried on without any decided advantage till the beginning of the spring of 47 B. C. Then it was learned that Pelusium had been taken by assault by an army that was coming to the relief of Cæsar; it was a body of auxiliaries from Syria, led by Mithridates of Pergamos. The Egyptians, fearing to be shut in between two enemies if they remained in Alexandria to await the coming of Mithridates, marched to meet him. The first battle, which was indecisive, took place near Memphis; but, a few days later, Cæsar, who had also quitted Alexandria, succeeded in joining the troops of Mithridates and a second battle was fought. The Egyptians were broken and cut to pieces, and King Ptolemy drowned himself in the Nile. Cæsar returned with his victorious army to Alexandria, now humbled; the turbulent populace of the great city, henceforth, knowing the power of the Roman steel, received the consul with loud acclaims. Thus ended the War of Alexandria, which should rather be styled the *War of Cleopatra*, since this war, adding nothing to Cæsar's fame, injurious to his interests, useless to his country, and to which he nearly sacrificed both his life and his glory, had been maintained by him for the love of Cleopatra.





III.

EIGHTEEN years previous to these events, Cæsar, being ædile, had endeavored to have voted by a plebiscit the execution of the will of Alexander II., who had bequeathed Egypt to the Roman people. Now, Egypt was subjugated and Cæsar had but to say the word for this vast and rich country to become a Roman province. But in the year 63 Cleopatra was only just born; in the year 65 Cæsar had not felt the bite of the "Serpent of the Nile," as Shakspeare calls her—the consul took good care not to remember the propositions of the ædile. The first act of Cæsar on reëntering Alexandria was solemnly to recognize Cleopatra as Queen of Egypt. In order, however, to humor the ideas of the Egyptians he determined that she should espouse her second brother, Ptolemy Neoteras, and share the sovereignty with him. As, however, Dion remarks, this union and this sharing were equally visionary; the young prince, who was only fifteen, could be neither king nor even husband to the queen; apparently Cleopatra was the wife of her

brother, and his partner on the throne ; in reality she reigned solely, and continued the mistress of Cæsar.

During the eight months of the Alexandrian struggle Cæsar, shut up in the palace, had scarcely quitted Cleopatra, except for the fight, and this long honeymoon had seemed short to him. He loved the beautiful queen as fondly, and perhaps more so, than in the early days, and he could not resolve to leave her. In vain the gravest interests called him to Rome, where disorder reigned and blood was flowing, and where, since the December of the preceding year, not a letter had been received from him ;¹ in vain, in Asia, Pharnaces, the conquerer of the royal allies of Rome and of the legions of Domitius, has seized on Pontus, Cappadocia, and Armenia ; in vain, in Africa, Cato and the last adherents of Pompey have concentrated at Utica an immense army — fourteen legions, ten thousand Numidian horsemen, and one hundred and twenty elephants of war ; in vain, in Spain, all minds are excited and revolt is brewing. Duty, interest, ambition, danger — Cæsar forgets everything in the arms of Cleopatra. Truly he is preparing to leave Alexandria, but it is to accompany the beautiful queen on a pleasure excursion up the Nile. By the orders of Cleopatra, one of those immense flat-bottomed pleasure vessels has been prepared, such as were used by the Lagidæ for

¹ Cicero to Atticus.— In this letter, dated from Brundisium, June 14, 706 A. U. C., Cicero speaks of the long sojourn of Cæsar at Alexandria. There is thought to be much trouble there, “valde esse impedimentum.” This “impedimentum,” of which Cæsar makes no complaint, was Cleopatra.

sailing on the river, and called thalamegos (pleasure pinnace). It was a veritable floating palace, half a stadium long and forty cubits high above the water-line. The stories rose one above the other, surrounded by porticos and open galleries, and surmounted by belvederes sheltered from the sun by purple awnings. Within were numerous apartments, furnished with every convenience and every luxurious refinement of Greco-Egyptian civilization, vast saloons surrounded by colonnades, a banqueting-hall provided with thirteen couches, with a ceiling arched like a grotto, and sparkling with a rock-work of jasper, lapis lazuli, cornelian, alabaster, amethyst, aquamarine, and topaz. The vessel was built of cedar and cypress, the sails were of byssus, the ropes were dyed purple. Throughout, carved by skillful hands, were the opening chalices of the lotus, wound the volutes of the acanthus, twined garlands of bean-leaves and flowers of the date palm. On all sides shone facings of marble, of thyia, ivory, onyx, capitals and architraves of bronze. Mimes, acrobats, troops of dancing-girls, and flutists were on board to cheer the austere solitude of the Thebaïd with the diversions and luxuries of Alexandria.

Cæsar and Cleopatra anticipate with rapture this voyage of enchantments; they will carry their young loves amid the old cities of Egypt, along the "Golden Nile," which they will ascend as far as the mysterious land of Ethiopia. But on the very eve of their departure the legionaries become indignant, they murmur, they rebel; their officers cry aloud to the consul, and Cæsar returns to reason. For an instant he contem-

plates carrying Cleopatra away with him to Rome, but that project must be deferred. It is in Armenia that the danger is most pressing; it is to Armenia that he will first repair. He leaves two legions with Cleopatra — a faithful and formidable guard, which will secure the tranquility of Alexandria, and sets sail for Antioch.

During the campaigns of Cæsar in Armenia and Africa (from July, 47, to June, 46, B. C.) Cleopatra remained in Alexandria, where a few months after the departure of the dictator she gave birth to a son. She named him Ptolemy-Cæsarion, thus proclaiming her intimate relations with Cæsar, which, however, were no secret to the Alexandrians.

When Cæsar, the army of Cato under Thapsus being crushed, was about to return to Rome, he wrote to Cleopatra to meet him there. Probably she arrived there about midsummer of the year 46, at the period of the celebration of Cæsar's four triumphs. In the second, the triumph of Egypt, Cleopatra must have beheld, at the head of the train of captives, her sister Arsinoë, who at the breaking out of the war of Alexandria had joined her enemies. The queen had brought with her her son Cæsarion, her pseudo-husband the young Ptolemy, and a numerous train of courtiers and officers. Cæsar gave up his superb villa on the right bank of the Tiber as a residence for Cleopatra and her court.

Officially, if we may thus use this very new word to express a very old thing, Cleopatra was well received in Rome. She was the queen of a great country, the ally of the Republic, and she was the guest of Cæsar, then all-powerful; but, beneath the homage offered, lurked

contempt and hatred. Not that Roman society took offence at her intrigue with Cæsar; for more than half a century, republican Rome had strangely changed its chaste morals and severe principles. Public morality, private morality,—were utterly transformed. Electors sold their votes, and the elected made use of their offices to re-imburse themselves for their election expenses and to provide means for their reëlection; they sold alliances, prevaricated, plundered, took ransoms, having an understanding with the publicans (tax-gatherers) to grind down the provinces. In the latter times of the Republic in Rome politics became the school of crime; the theater, where, contrary to the custom of the Greeks, women might take part in the comedies and in the obscene games of the mimes and mountebanks, became the school of debauchery. The favorite poet is the licentious Catullus; the mold of fashion, and at the same time the pupil, client, and friend of Cicero is Cœlius, a man of unscrupulous ambition and unbridled libertinism. Assassination became a means of government, poison a way to an inheritance. From the time of the proscriptions of Sylla, the hold on life seemed very precarious; one must make the most of it. “Let us live and love,” says Catullus. “Suns may set and rise again, but we, when our brief day is ended, must sleep a night that has no morrow.” The time was past when the Roman matron lived quietly at home and spun with her maidens. She sought adventures, plotted, gave or sold herself. Greek libertinism and Oriental voluptuousness had reached Rome and been transformed into a gross sensuality. The multiplicity of divorces

“annihilated the sacredness of the family”; the love of luxury, ambition, and extravagant passions ruined its honor, and the noblest of the patrician ladies were the foremost in this race of debauchery. Among them were Valeria, the sister of Hortensius; Sempronia, wife of Junius Brutus; Claudia, wife of Lucullus, and the other Claudia, wife of Quintus Metellus Celer. Again there was Junia, the wife of Lepidus; Posthumia, the wife of Sulpicius; Lollia, the wife of Gabinius; Tertullia, the wife of Crassus; Mucia, the wife of the great Pompey; Servilia, the mother of Brutus, and many others.

In so dissolute and adulterous a city, it could shock no one that Cæsar should be false to his wife with one mistress or even with several; but in the midst of her debaucheries, and even though Rome had lost many of her ancient virtues, she still preserved the pride of the Roman name. These conquerors of the world looked upon other nations as of servile race and inferior humanity. Little did they care for the transient loves of Cæsar and Ennoah, queen of Mauritania, nor would they have cared any more had Cleopatra served merely to beguile his leisure during the war of Alexandria; but in bringing this woman to the seven-hilled city, in publicly acknowledging her as his mistress, in forcing on all the spectacle of a Roman citizen, five times consul and thrice dictator, as the lover of an Egyptian woman, Cæsar seemed, according to the ideas of the time, to insult all Rome. As Merivale justly observes: “If one can imagine the effect that would have been produced in the fifteenth century by the marriage of a peer of England or of a grandee of Spain with a Jewess

some idea may be formed of the impression made on the Roman people by the intrigue of Cæsar and Cleopatra."

Cæsar had received supreme power and had been deified. He was created dictator for ten years, and in the city his statue bore this inscription: "Cæsari semideo"—To Cæsar the demigod. He might believe himself sufficiently powerful to despise Roman prejudices; for the rest, during the last two years of his life, Cæsar, till then so prudent, so cautious in humoring the sentiments of the plebeians, so skillful in using them for his own designs, pretended in his public life to despise and brave public opinion. It was the same in his private life; far from dismissing Cleopatra, he visited her more frequently than ever at the villa on the Tiber, talked incessantly of the queen, and allowed her publicly to call her son Cæsarion.

He went further still; he erected in the temple of Venus the golden statue of Cleopatra, thus adding to the insult to the Roman people the outrage to the Roman gods. It was not enough that Cæsar for love of Cleopatra had not reduced Egypt to a Roman province; not enough that he had installed this foreigner in Rome, in his villa on the banks of the Tiber, and that he lavished on her every mark of honor and every testimony of love;—now he dedicated, in the temple of a national divinity, the statue of this prostitute of Alexandria, this barbarous queen of the land of magicians, of thaumaturgy [wonder-working], of eunuchs, of servile dwellers by the Nile, these worshipers of stuffed birds and gods with the heads of beasts. Men asked

each other where the infatuation of Cæsar would end. It was reported that the dictator was preparing to propose, by the tribune Helvius Cinna, a law which would permit him to espouse as many wives as he desired in order to beget children by them. It was said that he was about to recognize the son of Cleopatra as his heir, and still further, that after having exhausted Italy in levies of men and money he would leave the government of Rome in the hands of his creatures and transfer the seat of empire to Alexandria. These rumors aroused all minds against Cæsar, and, if we may credit Dion, tended *to arm his assassins against him* (to furnish the dagger to slay him).¹ Notwithstanding this hostility, Cleopatra was not deserted in the villa on the Tiber. To please the divine Julius, to approach him more intimately, the Cæsarians controlled their antipathy and frequently visited the beautiful queen. To this court of Egypt transported to the banks of the Tiber came Mark Antony, Dolabella, Lepidus, then general-of-horse; Oppius Curio, Cornelius Balbus, Helvius Cinna, Matius, the prætor Vendidius, Trebonius, and others. Side by side with the partisans of Cæsar were also some of his secret enemies, such as Atticus, a celebrated silver merchant with great interests in Egypt, and others whom he had won over, like Cicero. The latter while making his peace with Cæsar did not forget his master-passion, love of books and of curiosities. An insatiable collector, he thought to enrich his library at Tusculum without loosing his purse-

¹ If this were true, Cleopatra would have been as fatal to Cæsar as she afterwards became to Antony.

strings, and requested Cleopatra to send for him to Alexandria, where such treasures abounded, for a few Greek manuscripts and Egyptian antiquities. The queen promised willingly, and one of her officers, Aumonius, who, formerly an ambassador of Ptolemy Auletes to Rome, had there known Cicero, undertook the commission; but whether through forgetfulness or negligence the promised gifts came not, and Cicero preserved so deep an enmity to the queen in consequence that he afterwards wrote to Atticus, "I hate the queen (*odi reginam*)," giving as his only reason for this aversion the failure of the royal promise. The former consul had also received an affront from Sarapion, one of Cleopatra's officers. This man had gone to his house, and when Cicero asked him what he wished he had replied rudely: "I seek Atticus," and at once departed. How often does the ill-conduct of upper servants create a prejudice against the great.

The assassination of Cæsar, which struck Cleopatra like a thunderbolt, would have been the destruction of all her hopes if one could lose hope at twenty-five. Cæsar dead, there was nothing to detain her in Rome, and she did not feel safe in this hostile city amid the bloody scenes of the parricidal days. She prepared to depart, but Antony having entertained for a moment the weak desire of opposing to Octavius as Cæsar's heir the little Cæsarion, Cleopatra remained in Rome until the middle of April. When the queen perceived that this project was finally abandoned, she hastened to depart from the city where she had experienced so much contempt and which she quitted with rage in her heart.



IV.

CLEOPATRA reëntered Alexandria without opposition, but the civil war which threatened between the adherents of Cæsar and the republicans made her situation difficult and her crown precarious. The ally of the Roman people, she could not remain neutral in the struggle; but at the risk of the victors', whoever they might be, making her pay the penalty of her desertion by annexing Egypt to the empire, she inclined to the Triumvirs; for the partisans of Cæsar had been less inimical to her while in Rome, and Antony, through policy indeed, rather than friendship, had spoken in favor of her son's succession. On the other hand, if the Triumvirs possessed the West, their adversaries were almost the masters of the East, and directly threatened Egypt. At the very commencement of hostilities Cassius, who with eight legions occupied Syria, called upon Cleopatra to send him reënforcements, and almost at the same time one of the lieutenants of Antony, Dolabella, besieged in Laodicea, addressed the same demand to her.

Cassius was seemingly victorious, Dolabella the reverse; prudence would have advised to side with the former, nevertheless Cleopatra remained faithful to her tacit alliance with the Cæsarians. Four Roman legions, two left by Cæsar and two composed of the veterans of Gabinius, were stationed at Alexandria. The queen commanded them to set out for Laodicea, but the envoy of Dolabella, Allienus, who had taken the command of these troops, came upon the army of Cassius in Syria. Whether from pusillanimity or premeditated treachery, Allienus united his legions with those of the enemy against whom he was leading them, and only a single Egyptian squadron, which Cleopatra had also despatched to Laodicea, reached Antony.

Soon after the departure of the legions, 43 B. C., the young king Ptolemy died suddenly. Cleopatra was accused of having him poisoned. This crime, which is far from being authenticated, is by no means improbable. It may be that when Cleopatra by the departure of the Roman soldiers found herself without any reliable troops, she dreaded either a conspiracy in the palace or an insurrection which would drive her from the throne to place on it her brother. Six years previously the same circumstance had resulted to the advantage of her other brother, and Cleopatra had nearly fallen a victim. Immediately on the death of Ptolemy XIII., the queen took as the sharer of the throne her young son Ptolemy-Cæsarion, then four years of age.

Stationed at Cyprus was an Egyptian fleet. Cassius sent orders direct to the navarch Sarapion, who com-

manded it, to unite with the republican fleet, and the latter obeyed without even referring to his sovereign. Not satisfied with the four legions and the squadron which he had already received from Cleopatra, much against her will, indeed, Cassius again sent her word to furnish him new supplies of troops, ships, provisions, and money. The queen, who feared an invasion, which she was without forces to repel, sought to temporize. She expressed her regrets to Cassius that she could not at once send him aid, Egypt being ruined by famine and pestilence. Famine indeed reigned there by reason of an insufficient inundation of the Nile, but Egypt was not ruined for all that, and whilst Cleopatra was evading the demands of Cassius she was preparing a new fleet to assist the Triumvirs. Cassius was not deceived by the diplomacy of Cleopatra's envoy. He determined to invade Egypt. He had already set out on his march when Brutus, on the approach of the army of Antony, summoned him into Macedonia. Then Cleopatra sent her fleet to join the party of the Cæsarians, but on the way this fleet was dispersed and almost utterly destroyed by a tempest. Throughout this war ill-fortune seemed to pursue Cleopatra — with the best will to second the Triumvirs she had been able to give them almost no assistance; on the contrary, she had furnished reënforcements to the republicans, who, well knowing that these reënforcements had been most unwillingly supplied, desired to take vengeance for her reluctance.

The battle of Philippi freed Cleopatra from her anxiety on the score of the republicans; but she had still to fear the penalty of her apparent desertion of

the Triumvirs. After his victory over Brutus, Antony overran Greece and Asia Minor for the purpose of levying tribute, and was everywhere received as a conqueror. Cities and kings vied with each other in adulation, heaped up honors and lavished gifts on him to secure immunity for the succor they had afforded, willingly or by force, to the vanquished party. At Athens, Megara, Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tarsus embassies and royal visits followed each other. To preserve to their kingdoms a quasi-autonomy, every petty sovereign of Asia hastened to obtain from the powerful triumvir a new investiture of his crown. Cleopatra alone, whether from queenly pride or womanly art, remained in Egypt and sent no ambassador; she seemed to pretend to ignore that the victory at Philippi had rendered Antony the master of the East.

The silence of Cleopatra surprised and irritated Antony. Perhaps wounded pride was not the only sentiment in the soul of the triumvir. When he was commanding the cavalry of Gabinius he had seen Cleopatra, then fifteen years old; he had seen her again at Rome, the year of Cæsar's death. Without agreeing wholly with Appian, that Antony was already in love with the queen of Egypt, it may be credited that her beauty and her attractions had made on him a deep impression. He remembered the "Siren of the Nile," and amid the visits of so many kings and powers it was, above all, hers that he awaited, but awaited in vain. In the position of Antony, however, to speak was to be obeyed. He commanded Cleopatra to repair to Tarsus, to vindi-

cate before his tribunal her ambiguous conduct during the civil war. Antony enjoyed in advance this deliciously cruel pleasure: the beautiful Cleopatra, the haughty queen of Egypt, the woman at whose feet he had seen the divine Julius, coming to him as a suppliant.

Quintus Dellius, a creature of Antony's, was appointed to bear the message to Cleopatra. This Dellius, an unscrupulous intriguer and agreeable man of pleasure, had by turns betrayed all men and all parties. He was called "The Hunter of the Civil Wars"—*Desultor bellorum civilium*. He was destined to die the friend of Horace, who dedicated an ode to him, and the friend of Augustus who enriched him. In the meanwhile he was going to make use of Cleopatra to enable him to attain still higher favor with Antony. At the first audience granted him by the beautiful queen, he understood the passion of Cæsar and foresaw that of Antony. Feeling that Cleopatra would captivate the triumvir at the first glance, he saw at once the advantage to be gained in the near future from the patronage of the Egyptian queen; and from the envoy of Antony he suddenly became the courtier of Cleopatra, and from an ambassador an intermeddler. He exhorted the queen to hasten into Cilicia, assuring her that, despite his appearance and manners suitable to the amphitheater, the rough soldier of Pharsalia and Philippi was not so ferocious as he seemed. "Never," said he, "will Antony call tears to eyes so beautiful, and far from causing you the least pain he will fulfil

your every wish." Dellius found no difficulty in persuading Cleopatra: she saw, shining through his words, the dawn of a new fortune equal to that which she had dreamed of as the mistress of Cæsar. According to a somewhat doubtful tradition, Dellius might have succeeded in more than securing the attention of Cleopatra: he might have made himself beloved by her. Be this as it may, the queen, yielding to his counsels, determined to set out for Tarsus, but in order to enhance the value of the proceeding and to make it more effective she was careful not to precipitate it, and under various pretexts she often delayed her departure, notwithstanding the entreaties of Dellius and the messages constantly increasing in earnestness despatched by Antony.

On a day when the triumvir on his judgment-seat was giving public audience in the midst of the agora of Tarsus, a great uproar arose on the banks of the Cydnus. Antony inquired what it meant. Flatterers, as all Greeks are, the Cilicians replied that it was Aphrodite herself who, for the happiness of Asia, was coming to visit Bacchus. Antony liked to assume the name of Bacchus. The crowd which thronged the public square rushed in a body to the shore. Antony was left alone with his lictors in the deserted agora—his dignity kept him there, but he fidgets in his curule chair, till finally curiosity gains the day. Unaccustomed to self-control, he, also, descends to the strand. The sight is worth the trouble—a vision divine which carries one back to the dawn of mythologic times. Cleopatra is en-

tering Tarsus, ascending the Cydnus on a vessel plated with gold over which float sails of Tyrian purple. The silver oars rise and fall in measured cadence to the music of Greek lyres and Egyptian harps. The queen, the goddess Cleopatra, lying beneath an awning of cloth of gold which shades the deck, appears as the painters usually represent Aphrodite, surrounded by rosy children like the Loves, beautiful young girls scarcely clad with lightest drapery as Graces and sea-nymphs, bearing garlands of roses and the lotus-flower and waving great fans of the feathers of the ibis. On the prow of the vessel other Nereides form groups worthy the brush of Apelles; Loves suspended to the yards and rigging seem descending from the skies. Incense and spikenard kept burning by slaves surround the vessel with a light and odorous vapor which sends its perfume to both banks of the stream.

Antony at once despatched one of his favorites to Cleopatra to request her to sup with him that same night. Cleopatra, availing herself doubtless of her title of goddess rather than of that of queen—a queen of Egypt was nobody in comparison with a triumvir—made response that it was she who invited Antony to supper, and the Roman did not decline the invitation. He went at the hour appointed to the palace, which several days previously Cleopatra had had secretly prepared with gorgeous magnificence. The banquet-hall, sumptuously adorned, shone with the brilliancy of chandeliers, candelabra, and a multitude of golden sconces arranged symmetrically in circles, lozenges, etc. The feast, worthy

of its decorations, abounded in nectarean wines served in vases of solid gold, and in rare and artistic viands prepared by a master hand. Antony was a great gastronomist, and three months before this had given his cook a house for a dish that pleased him. He would have given a whole town to the cook of Cleopatra. As for the beautiful Egyptian, the triumvir was already willing to give her the whole world. The next day Antony gave a supper to the queen. He hoped to surpass, by means of money, the magnificence of his reception, but he was the first to recognize his inability to rival her as an Amphitryon, and, clever man that he was,¹ he jested gaily in Cleopatra's presence at his meanness and coarse taste. Probably in these two entertainments there was no mention of the grievances, real or pretended, with which Rome charged Cleopatra. Antony had no longer any thought of summoning her before his tribunal as a suppliant—the suppliant would have been Antony himself if Cleopatra had rejected his advances. Henceforth it was the queen that commanded; the all-powerful triumvir had become the “slave of the Egyptian woman,” as Dion Cassius indignantly exclaims.

The first advantage Cleopatra took of her power was to have her son, by Cæsar, Ptolemy-Cæsarion, recog-

¹ We must not judge Antony wholly by the passionate attacks of Cicero. Plutarch quotes a number of clever retorts of this brave and excellent soldier; and, in another order of ideas, his letter to Octavius and Hirtius, from which we find long extracts in the “Third Philippic,” is the work of a skillful politician as well as a model of wit.

nized as legitimate heir to the crown of Egypt. At Antony's request the decree was immediately ratified by his colleagues, Octavius and Lepidus. Antony alleged as a pretext for this favor to Cleopatra, the services she rendered to the Romans during the civil war. After having satisfied her ambition, Antony became without difficulty the executor of her revenge. Like most women the beautiful queen was vindictive, and like Dionysius the Tyrant, she carried her prudence to the extent of crime. Her sister Arsinoë had escaped from Rome, where she had contributed to Cæsar's triumph; she had found an asylum at Miletus. Whether Cleopatra feared that, ambitious and intriguing as she had already shown herself in the War of Alexandria, she might again create trouble in Egypt, or simply to avenge herself for Arsinoë's former conduct, the queen besought Antony to have her put to death. One crime more or less weighed but little on the conscience of the proscriber of the year 711 A. U. C. The unfortunate Arsinoë was murdered in the temple of Artemis Leucophryne, where she had sought refuge from the hired assassins of Antony. An Egyptian, also a refugee in Asia Minor where he passed himself off as Ptolemy XII., drowned as was well-known in the Nile, was also put to death. Cleopatra bore an ill-will, the cause of which is not known, also to Megabyses, of the great temple of Ephesus. He was arrested by Antony's order, and his life was saved only by the interference of the magistrates of the city, speaking in the name of the people, who rose in insurrection to rescue him. At the same time, Sarapion, the former commander of

the Egyptian squadron at Cyprus, was beheaded by the order of Antony, thus avenging Cleopatra for the defection of her officer and Antony for the aid given to Cassius. When Cleopatra arrived at Tarsus in the summer of 41 B. C., Antony was preparing to march against the Parthians. At the end of a month the concentration of his troops was accomplished, the fleets ready, and no obstacle remained to the departure of the army. But this month had been passed with Cleopatra, and Antony had found it very short. Listening only to his passion, he put off the expedition till the spring and followed the queen into Egypt.

Then began that mad life of pleasure and debauchery, that long and sumptuous orgy, which even in the third century of our era, and after the excesses of Nero and Heliogabalus, was still quoted in the Roman world, though then slaves to every corruption and exhausted in efforts of magnificence, as an inimitable model.

O: *Ανιμητοδίου*: "Those whose life is inimitable." This, moreover, was the name assumed by Antony and Cleopatra and the intimate companions of their pleasures.¹ Plutarch and Dion relate that festival succeeded to festival, entertainment to entertainment, and hunting parties to excursions on the Nile. Cleopatra quitted Antony neither day nor night. She drank with him, she gambled with him, hunted with him, she was even present at his military exercises when by chance this man of war, remembering that he was a soldier, took a fancy to review his legions. It is further related that

¹ A curious inscription, discovered in Alexandria by M. C. Vescher, is as follows: "Antony the Great, the Inimitable."

Cleopatra was incessantly inventing some new diversion, some unexpected pleasure. But this list is very brief, this sketch a very modest and faint description to give an idea of the superb orgies, the unrestrained voluptuousness, and the nameless prodigalities of the "Inimitables." Pliny alone of the ancient writers has summed them up, perhaps unknown to himself, in the legend, more or less symbolic, of the Pearl. One day, says this writer, when Antony was extolling the luxuriousness and profusion of a certain entertainment, he exclaimed that no other could surpass it. Cleopatra, who always affected to put no limit to the possible, replied that the present feast was a wretched affair, and she laid a wager that the next day she would give one on which she would expend ten millions of sesterces (two millions one hundred thousand francs). Antony took the bet. The next day the feast, magnificent as it was, had nothing to distinguish it from the preceding, and Antony did not fail to rally Cleopatra. "Per Bacchus," cried he, "this would never cost ten millions of sesterces!" "I know that," replied the queen, "but you see only the accessories. I myself will drink alone the ten millions," and at once detaching from her ear a single pearl—the largest and most perfect ever seen—she threw it into a golden cup, in which it was dissolved in the vinegar there prepared, and swallowed at one draught the acid beverage. She was about to sacrifice the second pearl when L. Plancus, the umpire of the wager, arrested her hand by declaring that she had won.¹

¹ Pliny, IX. 35. The legend is not so much of a myth as it appears. Pliny relates that Octavius, having found the second

Picture to yourself the most costly materials, marbles, breccia, granites, ebony and cedar woods, porphyry, basalt, agate, onyx, lapis-lazuli, bronze, silver, ivory, and gold; conceive the most imposing Egyptian, the most beautiful Grecian architecture, imagine the Parthenon and the temple of Jupiter Olympus, the Pavilion of Rameses, and the ruins of Apollinopolis Magna; recreate the royal palaces of Alexandria, which, with their dependencies, their gardens, their terraces, rising one above another, made up a third of the city: reconstruct the massive enclosures — those double pylons into which opened avenues bordered with sphinxes; those obelisks, those magnificent propylæa, those saloons three hundred feet long and a hundred and fifty wide, supported by vast columns, in which rise double rows of pillars ten meters in circumference and twenty meters in height, bursting into lotus blossoms at their summits; those sanctuaries with their screens enameled in gold and tortoiseshell, and studded with gems; those long picture galleries adorned with the paintings of Zeuxis, Apelles, and Protogenes; those magnificent thermæ with their calidaria, their basins of hot and cold water, their retiring-rooms with walls of red porphyry, their porticos adorned with statues; those gymnasia, theaters, hippodromes, those stages covered with saffron powder, those triclinia where the couches of embossed silver rested on Babylonian carpets; those atria with their uncovered roofs, sustained by Corinthian columns with pearl in the treasury of Cleopatra, had it cut in two, and with it adorned the ears of the Pantheon Venus.

capitals of golden bronze, by day shaded by purple awnings, the silk of which was worth its weight in gold, and at night open to the starry sky. See, at all seasons, blooming in the gardens roses and violets, and scatter the pavements of onyx and mosaics four times a day with fresh flowers; people this scenery with crowds of slaves, pipers, players of the harp and psaltery, dancers, actors, Atellans [of the drama, as at Atellan, of lascivious character, *Atellanæ*], acrobats, mimes, gymnasts, ballet-dancers, and serpent-charmers. Load these tables with oysters from Tarentum, lampreys dressed with garum, bonitos cooked in fig-leaves, pink ousels, quails, pheasants, swans, geese livers, stews made of the brains of birds, hares cooked rare and dusted with coriander seeds, truffles as large as the fist which were assumed to fall from the sky like aërolites, cakes of honey and wheat flour, and the most delicious fruits of the Mediterranean basin. In the kitchens, roasting before the fires on immense hearths, for the entertainment of fifteen guests, twelve wild boars, spitted successively at intervals of three minutes, so that, according to the duration of the feast, one of these animals might be exactly cooked at the very moment it was required to be served. Cool in snow the old Cæcuban wine, the Falernian ripened for twenty years, the wines of Phlemtes, Chios, Issa, the imperial wine of Lesbos, the ripe wine of Rhodes, the sweet wine of Mitylene, the Sapiian, smelling of violets, and the Thasos, said to "rekindle failing love." Light up the lamps, the torches, and the chandeliers, wind the pillars with streamers of fire; open the mouths of the bronze

colossi that the icy water may flow and cool the atmosphere, and the breasts of Isis that the sweet waters may perfume it; call in the choirs of singing women with their harps and cythera, and the females who dance nude with castanets of gold in their hands; add to them representations of comedies, the farces of mimes, the tricks of jugglers, and the phantasmagorias of the magicians; offer mock engagements in the harbor, and in the hippodrome chariot races and combats between lions; summon the masqueraders and witness the processions where cluster, around the golden car of Bacchus and the Cyprian, fifteen hundred satyrs, a thousand cupids, and eight hundred beautiful slaves as nymphs and mimes. Finally, imagine all that Asiatic pomp, Egyptian state, and Grecian refinement and depravity, and Roman power and licentiousness blended in a single form—a sensual and splendid woman, delighting in pleasure and sumptuousness—can achieve with such elements and you will have some idea, though very vague and feeble, of the “Life Inimitable.”

Sometimes Antony and Cleopatra indulged in more vulgar pleasures. Disguised, she as a barmaid, and he as a porter or a sailor, they ran, by night, about the streets of Alexandria, knocking at the doors of houses, abusing belated pedestrians, entering low lodging-houses, and quarreling with drunken men. To the great delight of Antony these frolics usually ended in fights. Despite his strength and skill, the Roman did not always win, and Cleopatra was sometimes well splashed with mud; but victors or vanquished, the lovers returned happy to the palace,

quite willing to renew their adventures. The secret, however, escaped, and thenceforth the royal pair were handled more cautiously, without being entirely spared.¹

These follies did not turn the Alexandrians against the triumvir as much as might have been supposed. If they had little esteem for him, they liked him for his good humor, and the ease with which he was approached. They delighted to say: "Antony wears for the Romans a tragic mask, but here he lays it aside, and assumes for us the mask of comedy." His intimate companions and his officers, who shared without scruple his voluptuous and unbridled excesses, were still less inclined to resent them, for, like himself, they yielded to the bewitching charm of Cleopatra. They loved, they admired her, they bore cheerfully her snubs and sarcasms, and were not shocked, even if in the midst of a feast, at a sign from Antony, she quitted the banquet hall with him, and returning after a short absence resumed her position on the couch of the triclinium. They studied to please and divert her, each strove to be the vilest toady to the queen—"humillimus assentator reginæ"—for a smile of

¹ Another incident, also related by Plutarch, says that Antony sometimes sought relaxation from the excesses of the "Life Inimitable" in more tranquil pleasures, such as angling. Vain even in trifles, and mortified if he caught nothing, he had fishes attached to his hook by a diver. The trick did not escape Cleopatra. The next day she had a salted fish fastened to his hook, which the triumvir drew gravely from the water amid shouts of laughter. From this time Antony renounced angling.

Cleopatra they sacrificed all dignity. Once, L. Plan-
cus, a man of consular dignity, crowned with rushes,
a fish's tail attached to his loins, and his naked body
painted blue, actually performed in her presence the
dance of Glaukos.

With Cæsar, Cleopatra had instinctively played the
part of a crowned Aspasia, ever bewitching, but uniting
dignity with grace, concealing the courtesan beneath
the robe of a queen, ever equable in mood, expressing
herself in the choicest language, talking politics, art,
literature, her marvelous faculties rising without effort
to the level of the lofty intelligence of the dictator: with
Antony, Cleopatra, at first through policy, afterwards
through love, played the part of a Laïs born by chance
to a throne. Seeing at once that the inclinations of
Antony were coarse and low, that his wit was common-
place and his language very loose, she immediately set
herself to the same tone. She kept pace with this
great drinker, remaining even till dawn with the foam-
ing flagons and goblets continually replenished; she
accompanied him by night into the suspicious streets
of Rhakotis, the old portion of Alexandria; she jested
cynically, sang amatory songs, recited licentious poems;
she quarreled with him, provoking and returning
both abuse and blows. Nothing delighted Antony
like the sight of that ravishing little hand threat-
ening and beating him, or to hear from those divine
lips, fit for the choruses of Sophocles or the odes of
Sappho, the same words that he had heard bandied
among the guard of the Esquiline gate and in the
unmentionable dens of the Suburra.



V.

IN the winter of 39 B. C. the war of Persia recalled Antony into Italy. Through ambition or resentment against Octavius, and also, says Plutarch, through jealousy, Fulvia his wife had fomented this war. She hoped that these disturbances would compel Antony to leave Cleopatra, in order to defend his power threatened in Rome. Fulvia had succeeded but too well. Antony, it is true, was sailing towards Brundisium with two hundred sail, but the victorious Octavius was all-powerful in Italy, his adversaries dispersed or proscribed; she herself had fled and was dying, without a hope of again seeing her husband. Antony heard of her death while touching at a port in Sicily. This, in the end, made a peace easy. Antony had taken no part in the war of Persia; Fulvia alone, aided by her father-in-law, had excited it; her death rendered an accommodation possible between Antony and Octavius. Cocceius Nerva, Pollio, and Mecænas contrived an interview at Brundisium. They were reconciled and made a new

division of the empire: Octavius took the West, as far as the Adriatic; Antony, the East; and Lepidus had to be content with the Roman possessions in Africa.

The treaty of Brundisium gave great satisfaction at Rome, where, after so much dissension and bloodshed, peace was ardently desired. To secure the fulfilment of it, the friends of the Triumvirs sought to unite them by family ties, and they proposed a marriage between Antony, who had just lost his wife, and Octavia, sister of Octavius, the widow of Marcellus. This noble woman, who to the rarest qualities added great beauty of person, could not fail, they thought, to secure and fix the love of Antony; she would thus maintain harmony between the brothers-in-law, to the great advantage of both and the good of the state. Octavius gladly accepted the project, and notwithstanding the passion he still entertained for Cleopatra, Antony, in view of the political advantages of this union, took good care not to refuse. The marriage was forthwith celebrated. The law forbade widows to marry before the tenth month, but the senate granted a dispensation to the sister of Octavius.

Antony remained at Rome during nearly the whole year 39 B. C. He lived in perfect accord with Octavius and shared with him the government of the empire; but although he had an equal part in authority and honors he felt that he was only second in Rome. In his justifiable pride as an old soldier, an accomplished warrior, the lieutenant of Cæsar at Pharsalia, and commander-in-chief at Philippi, he was indignant when he

thought of the supremacy, acknowledged by all, of this almost beardless youth. A famous Egyptian soothsayer, whom probably Cleopatra herself had despatched to Rome, encouraged Antony in these ideas by his predictions and horoscopes. "Your tutelar genius dreads that of Octavius," said he constantly. "Proud and lofty when alone, he loses power when you are with Octavius. Here your star is eclipsed; it is only away from Rome—it is in the East that it shines in full luster." A new revolt of the Parthians gave Antony a pretext for leaving Rome. He set out with Octavia, and touched first at Athens. There he remained during the winter of 39–38 B. C., forgetting not only the Parthians (leaving his lieutenant Ventidius to conduct the war against them), but Alexandria, the "Life Inimitable," and Cleopatra herself.¹ Doubtless he did not love his new wife, the beautiful Octavia, as ardently as he had loved Cleopatra, or in the same way, but assuredly he did love her. As feeble in will as powerful in body, Antony, the slave of woman, was easily dominated. Erewhile Fulvia had enslaved him, then Cleopatra had bewitched him, now he yielded to the quiet charm of Octavia.

At the close of the winter he undertook a brief campaign into Syria against Antiochus of Commagene, and soon after returned to Athens, where he remained two years. In 36, a new difficulty occurring between him and Octavius on the subject of the naval expedition against the pirates, in which he had refused to second

¹ Appian says positively that Antony was in love with Octavia.

the latter, civil war again became imminent. Antony planned a descent upon Italy, with three hundred vessels; Octavius, on his side, collected his legions; if blood did not yet flow, swords were half unsheathed. In the hope of preventing this unnatural war, Octavia entreated Antony to take her with him into Italy. The port of Brundisium having refused entrance to Antony's fleet, his vessels moored before Tarentum. Informed of this, Octavius was leading his troops by forced marches against that city. Octavia desired to land alone. She went to meet Octavius on the way to Venosa; passing through the outposts and sentinels, she approached her brother, who was attended by Agrippa and Mecænas. She warmly pleaded the cause of Antony, and especially conjured Octavius not to reduce her from the happiest of women to the most miserable. "At this moment," said she, "the eyes of the world are upon me, the wife of one of the rulers of Rome, and the sister of the other. Should the counsel of wrath prevail, should war be declared, it may be doubtful to which of you two Fate may give the victory, but it is certain to whichever it inclines I shall be in grief and desolation."

The ambitious Octavius was already coveting universal dominion, but he was a temporizer. He yielded to the prayers of Octavia, and for the second time this woman, who was the good genius of Antony, maintained the peace of the Roman world. The two triumvirs met on the shores of the Gulf of Tarentum, and after having lavished on each other various marks of affection they agreed to renew the triumvirate

for five years. Octavius gave Antony two legions to reënforce his army of the East, and in return Antony gave up one hundred triremes with brazen rostra and twenty Liburnian galleys for his Mediterranean fleet. These were the vessels that were to conquer at Actium ! From Tarentum, Octavia returned alone to Rome with the two children she had borne to Antony ; he himself embarked for Asia Minor, whither he was summoned by the war with the Parthians. The pair agreed to meet again, the expedition over, either at Athens or at Rome, when Antony hoped to receive the honors of a triumph.

From the winter of 39 to the summer of 36 B. C., for three long years, Cleopatra remained thus parted from Antony. She was queen of Egypt and Cyprus, she had borne one son to Cæsar and two to Antony, she possessed immense revenues and treasures inexhaustible, but she suffered in her pride and in her love from the desertion of the triumvir. Cleopatra at twenty years of age had in all probability not loved Cæsar, who was over fifty. She loved Antony. In fact, though she had at first given herself to the triumvir through policy, yet she soon felt for this rough soldier, handsome with the beauty of Hercules, master of the East, surrounded by glory and power, the same passion that she had inspired in him. If, indeed, the ancient authors do not state in words that Cleopatra loved Antony, the scenes which they depict can scarcely permit a doubt of it. There is a logic of circumstances. With his martial air, his lofty stature and broad chest, his mane of black hair

and eyes of gloom, his aquiline nose and harshly cut features, Antony certainly possessed manly attractions. His first wife, Fulvia, loved him passionately; his second wife, Octavia, loved him supremely; the haughty Cleopatra gave him love for love. Besides, Shakespeare tells us this, and the word of this great painter of the human heart, of this marvelously comprehensive genius, may well make up for the silence on this point of a Dion Cassius or a Paul Orose. 2

Great as might have been the suffering of this other Dido, one can scarcely imagine her enveloped in habiliments of woe and sighing in the retirement of her palace. In all probability Cleopatra continued her gay life of pompous show, giving to pleasure all the time that was left from official ceremonies, public audiences and other duties of the government, and her conferences with architects and engineers.¹ The Typhonium, at Denderah, dates from the reign of Cleopatra. As is shown by its cartouches, she also labored at the great temple of Denderah, at those of Edfou, Heminthis, and Coptos, as well as at the monuments of Thebes situated on the left bank of the Nile. At Alexandria, besides the Cæsarium, which it appears was begun by Cleopatra, she had many fine buildings erected; but as with many other more ancient palaces and temples, there remains of them not a vestige on that surface which the ruins of centuries have in so many places raised to a height of fully ten meters.

Did the queen seek to play the indifferent by leaving

¹ Like all the Ptolemies, the last of the Lagidæ was a great builder.

Antony without tidings, or, as Plutarch insinuates and Shakspeare declares, did she, during these three years, overwhelm him with dolorous appeals and burning messages of love? According to Josephus, her voluptuous temperament was ever leading her into transient amours. Besides Cneius Pompey, Cæsar, Dellius, Antony, and Herod, king of the Jews, the five lovers who are accredited or attributed to her, the queen of Egypt had many flirtations and anonymous entanglements. Is this calumny? It is rather a slander. Be this as it may, the accusation is no proof that Cleopatra no longer loved Antony. These riddles of the heart and the senses are, after all, no enigma.

As for Antony, it seems that he had indeed forgotten Cleopatra. Not only during the three years that he had passed with Octavia at Athens and Rome; not only on his return from the expedition against Antiochus of Commagene had he not visited Egypt, but even on his way from Tarentum to Laodicea he had not touched at Alexandria, which was almost directly in his course. He sailed straight for Syria. By a singular fatality, scarcely had he set foot in Asia when he felt his passion rekindle with the utmost violence. He established himself at Laodicea, and at once despatched his friend Fonteius Capito into Egypt to conduct Cleopatra to Syria. The queen, enchanted, had no thought of delaying her departure in order to make herself the more desired, as she had done five years before. She embarked at once, and was received at Laodicea by her lover with transports of joy. To prove otherwise than by caresses his unspeakable happiness at

seeing her again, he gave her, not jewels, but kingdoms: Chalcedon, Phœnicia, Cœlo-Syria, a great part of Cilicia, Genesereth in Judea, noted for its balm, and Nabathæ in Arabia. Antony had no right to dispose of these territories, which belonged to the *Roman people*; but mad with pride as much as with love he declared that "The glory of Rome was displayed much less in her conquests and possessions than in the gifts she bestowed.¹

A few days after they were again compelled to part, with the promise, however, of meeting again in the spring at Alexandria. Antony passed with his army into Armenia; Cleopatra returned to Egypt, passing through Apamea, Damascus, and Petrea. She desired to settle with the kings of Judea and Arabia the amount of the tribute which these rulers were to pay yearly for the portions of territory which Antony had bestowed. The king of Arabia promised three hundred talents (sixteen hundred and sixty thousand francs); the tribute of the king of the Jews was greater. This king was Herod, whom the protection of Antony had a few years before placed on the throne. He went to Damascus to meet Cleopatra. According to Josephus, Herod, who was remarkably handsome, repulsed the shameless advances of the queen, even proposing to put her to death whilst she was in his power in order to deliver Antony from her fatal influence; but his counselors dissuaded him from this crime, telling him that from

¹ Antony also made a gift to Cleopatra of the 300,000 manuscripts of the library of Pergamos, to replace a part of the volumes burned at Alexandria.

that moment he would incur the terrible vengeance of Antony.

Cleopatra had not been long in Alexandria when she received a message from Antony, dated at Leucocoma, a city on the seaboard of Syria. He entreated her to join him at once with money, stores, and clothing for his soldiers, who were destitute of everything. The war had been unsuccessful. By his too eager desire to rejoin Cleopatra in the spring, Antony had compromised the success of the campaign. When he reached Armenia, after a forced march of eight thousand stadia, he should have gone into winter quarters and not opened the campaign till the spring, with troops rested and refreshed, and at a favorable season. Too impatient to submit to this long delay, he entered Upper Media, and that his march might be more rapid he left behind all his siege machinery under the guard of one detachment. Chariots, towers, catapults, battering-rams eighty feet long — all were destroyed by the Parthian cavalry. Through the want of these batteries Antony failed in the attack on the city of Phraata. Threatened by an overwhelming force, he was compelled to retreat. It was midwinter, the legionaries had to march through the snow amid freezing squalls. Every morning many were found frozen to death. Provisions failed, they lost their way, and the formidable Parthian cavalry harassed the exhausted columns. In this terrible retreat, the remembrance of which may have occurred to Napoleon before crossing the Niemen, Antony recovered his energy and his qualities as a general; insensible to fatigue and hunger he was

everywhere present; he was both imperator and centurion. Ever at the point where danger threatened most, in twenty-seven days he fought eighteen battles. Victor at night, the next day the struggle was renewed against fresh and ever-increasing forces. When Antony reached the coast of Syria his army was reduced from seventy thousand to thirty-eight thousand men. More fortunate than Crassus, however, the Romans brought back their eagles.

Cleopatra in vain used all despatch; she did not reach Antony as soon as he had hoped, and his impatience became agony. He imagined that the queen would not comply with the appeal of a conquered man. Overcome by despair he fell into a sort of stupor. Then he sought distraction in drinking, but the pleasures of the table, of which he had been so utterly deprived during the campaign of Media, had no power to relieve his anxiety. At the very height of an orgy he would suddenly rise from the table, leave his companions, and hasten to the seashore, where he would remain whole hours with his eyes fixed on the horizon in the direction whence he expected Cleopatra to appear.

At length the long-desired queen arrived with provisions and clothing, and about two hundred and forty talents of silver. The paying of the legionaries,¹ the reorganization of the army, and the collection of contributions compelled Antony to remain some time

¹ Thirty-five drachmæ were given to each legionary, and a less sum to every soldier.

longer at Leucocoma, and Cleopatra remained with him. Meanwhile, the news of the disastrous expedition having reached Rome, Octavia, still devoted to her husband despite the efforts of Octavius, who had had the cruelty to inform her of the reunion of Antony and Cleopatra, determined to embark for Asia. She entreated Octavius to furnish her with ships, soldiers, and money. Report had informed Octavius of the renewed passion of Antony. He yielded to the request of Octavia in the hope that the insulting reception she was likely to receive from her husband might detach her from him forever and rouse the indignation of the Romans. Not to risk a meeting with Cleopatra, Octavia landed at Athens, whence she sent word to Antony of her arrival. But the triumvir would not dismiss his mistress; he wrote to Octavia to remain at Athens, offering her as a pretext his intention of undertaking a new expedition against the Parthians. In fact, the king of Media, incessantly a prey to these wild hordes, had proposed to Antony an alliance against them. Without resenting Antony's refusal to receive her, of which refusal she did not deceive herself as to the cause, Octavia wrote again to Antony. This letter contained no reproaches; the young wife asked the triumvir simply whither she should send the reënforcements and the munitions she had brought for him. These included, besides military clothing and arms, machines of war and a large amount of money, three thousand chosen men as splendidly armed as the prætorian cohorts. Octavia had sacrificed a portion of her

private fortune to add this quota to the supplies. Niger was charged with the delivery of this letter. Often interviewed by Antony, who held him in great esteem, he mildly pointed out the wrongs of Octavia, reminded him of the rare virtues of this admirable woman, and exhorted him in the name of his own interests so seriously involved, and of his renown so sadly compromised, to abandon Cleopatra.

Much shaken, Antony hesitated. He thought he would go to Media. By this means he could send Cleopatra back to Egypt, leave Octavia in Greece, and delay, until his return from the campaign, the decision which he could not resolve now to make; but Cleopatra, with the penetration of a woman who loves, read the heart of Antony. She saw herself a second time in danger of losing her lover; moreover, she had the advantage over Octavia of being near Antony. She redoubled her smiles and caresses, purposely exaggerating the passion already very warm and unfeigned which possessed her. Then, at the first broaching of his departure for Media, she pretended a mortal sorrow. She would neither eat nor sleep, she passed her days and nights in tears; her pale face, her haggard features and sunken eyes, her stony look and pallid lips struck all who approached her. Her women, her friends, the intimates of the triumvir whom she had won over by her flatteries and promises, reproached Antony with his want of feeling. They accused him of allowing to die of grief the most adorable of women, who breathed only for him. "Octavia," said they, "is

bound to you merely by her brother's interest; she enjoys all the advantages of a wife's title, while Cleopatra, the queen of so many peoples, is called only the mistress of Antony, ἑρωμένην Ἀντωνίου. She refuses not this name, she does not feel humiliated by it—she glories in it: her sole bliss, her only ambition, is to live with thee!” Antony yielded, overcome by such speeches and by the fear that Cleopatra, who possessed his whole heart, and whom only his reason urged him to resist, would die of grief or take poison. He therefore postponed his expedition into Media, and returned with Cleopatra to Alexandria, where they resumed the “Life Inimitable.”

At the commencement of the year 34, Antony joined his legions in Asia. In a few days he defeated the Armenians, made prisoner the king and all his family, and reduced the country to subjection. After this glorious campaign Antony was to enjoy a triumph at Rome, but through love and devotion to Cleopatra, whom he wished to share his honors, the ceremony was given at Alexandria. For the first time a Roman received the reward of a triumph outside of Rome. It was an insult to the city, which thus seemed discrowned; it was an offense to the senate and the people, from whom alone the honor of a triumph could be received.

This scandalous triumph was of the utmost magnificence. Through Alexandria, decorated with the richest ornaments and massed with flowers, filed to the sound of horns and trumpets, the legionaries, the auxiliary cavalry, the priests, the censor-bearers, and the deputies from different cities, wearing crowns of gold,

chariots filled with trophies, and thousands of captives. Before the triumphal chariot, drawn by four white horses, walked the king Artavasdes, his wife, and two sons, bound in chains of gold. When the chariot arrived before Cleopatra, who, seated on a throne of gold and ivory, presided at the triumph, Antony stayed his quadriga, and presented to the queen his royal captives. After the procession and the sacrifices, he gave a mammoth banquet to the citizens of Alexandria. Enormous tables were spread in the gardens of the palace and in the public squares. The feast over, Antony seated Cleopatra on her throne of gold and ivory [chryselephantine], and placed himself on a similar one; the trumpets sounded, the soldiers presented arms, and the whole people collected in crowds around the two lovers. Then Antony proclaimed that from that time Cleopatra should be called the Queen of Kings, and her son, Cæsarion, the heir of Julius, the divine, the King of Kings; and he renewed to them the sovereignty of Egypt and Cyprus. Next he publicly settled the state of the three children borne him by Cleopatra. He gave to the eldest, Alexander, called by him Helios, Armenia, Media, and the country of the Parthians; to his twin-sister Cleopatra, whom he called Selene, the kingdom of Lybia; to Ptolemy, Phœnicia, Syria, and Cilicia. At each proclamation of the triumvir, heralds repeated his words and the trumpets sounded. The same day the youthful (infant) sovereigns were presented by Antony to the army and the people. Alexander appeared in the robes of the Mede with the cidaris (sash) of the kings of Persia, and a platoon of Armenians as a guard of

honor. Ptolemy had an escort of Macedonian mercenaries armed with lances eighteen feet long; he wore the long purple mantle, the sandals embroidered with gold, and the crown of precious stones of the successors of Alexander.

Cleopatra had already set the example of such masquerades. Two years before, on her return from Laodicea, when Antony had added to her dominions Phœnicia, Chalcedon, Cœlo-Syria and many other countries she had opened a new era and had assumed the name of the New Isis, or New Goddess. It was in the narrow garment of Isis, and on her head the covering of Isis (the golden horns, between which rested the vulture head), with the lotiform scepter in her hand, that she presided at public ceremonies or gave state audiences.

Submissive to these caprices Antony allowed himself to be represented in paintings and groups of statuary under the figures of Osiris and Bacchus, seated beside Cleopatra Isis and Cleopatra Selene. It seemed that bewitched by his mistress he renounced his country for her. He accepted the office of grand-gymnasiarch of Alexandria. He commanded that the effigy of the Egyptian queen should be engraved on the back of his imperial coins; he even dared to inscribe the name of Cleopatra on the shields of his legionaries. He permitted, by a shameless inversion of parts, that the queen should go about Alexandria seated in a curule chair, whilst he, carrying a scimeter and wearing a purple robe with jeweled clasps, accompanied her on foot surrounded by Egyptian officers and the base troop of eunuchs.



VI.

BY deposing Lepidus, Octavius had changed the triumvirate into a duumvirate, and the empire became divided between himself and Antony. But the domination of the East satisfied the pride of Antony no better than the domination of the West sufficed for the ambition of Octavius. Though twice deferred, the civil war remained inevitable. In his extreme caution, Octavius would still have delayed it; in his folly, Antony precipitated it. He despised Octavius as a general; his flatterers and his soldiers, who adored him, predicted victory to his arms; Cleopatra, who retained the angry recollection of the insolent reception by the Romans, burned to avenge it, and confiding in the sword of Antony, she already swore "By the justice which she would soon dispense at the Capitol."¹

¹ The Egyptian, says Florus forcibly, demanded as the price of her favors, the Roman Empire from a drunken emperor: "Mulier ægyptia ab ebrio imperatore pretium libidinum Romanum Imperium petit."

Antony began by overwhelming Octavius with reproaches and dark threats. His clients, who were numerous in Rome, his friends, his emissaries sent from Egypt, made themselves busy in enhancing with the people his grievances, real and supposed. Octavius, said they, has robbed Sextus Pompey of Sicily without dividing the spoils with his colleague: he has not even restored the hundred and twenty triremes borrowed for that war; he has deposed Lepidus and retained for himself alone the provinces, the legions, and the ships of war that had been assigned to that triumvir; he has distributed to his own soldiers nearly all the public lands of Italy, without keeping any for the veterans of Antony. Every act of the government of Octavius was criticized and incriminated. The people were reminded that he was crushing Italy under the weight of taxes; he was accused of aiming at sovereign power. They even went the length of saying that the true heir of Cæsar was not Octavius, his nephew, but Cæsar's own son Cæsarion, and that a second will of the Dictator would some day be forthcoming. According to Dion Cassius, Antony, by his formal recognition of Cæsarion as the legitimate son of Cæsar, had raised to a climax the uneasiness and anger of Octavius.

Meanwhile Octavius bided his time; his preparations for war were not complete, and Antony was still popular in Rome, where he maintained very many clients, protected by Octavia his wife. She, in spite of the insult inflicted by Antony, was still wholly devoted to him; in vain, on her return from Greece, had Octavius besought her to forget her husband and to quit his

dwelling; she had utterly refused to do so. She continued to reside in that famous mansion, once the property of the great Pompey, there educating with equal care and tenderness her own children by Antony and those of his first wife. The clients of Antony and the friends he sent from Alexandria were sure of finding support and assistance from Octavia; she even obtained favors for them from Octavius, irritated though he might be; finally she incessantly assumed in his presence the defense of Antony, excusing both faults and follies, and declaring that it was a hateful thing for two great emperors to incite Romans to slay each other, the one to avenge personal wrongs, the other for the love of a foreign woman.

Octavius, who took for his motto: "That which is well done is done quickly enough," *sat celeriter ferè quidquid fiat satis bene*, appeared to give way to the prayers of Octavia; but if he made no haste to declare war he was preparing it slowly, and preparing also public opinion. He made the most of Antony's disgraceful life in Egypt — his enslavement by Cleopatra. It was said in the senate, in the army, among the people, "Antony is no longer a Roman; he is the slave of the queen of Egypt, the incestuous daughter of the Lagidæ: his country is Alexandria and thither he would transfer the capital of the empire; his gods are Knoph with the ram's head, Ra of the vulture beak, the dog-headed Anubis — *latrans Anubis*; his counselors are the eunuch Mardion, Charmion, and Iras, the tire-woman of that Cleopatra on whom he has promised to bestow Rome." These idle tales inspired the Romans

with a sentiment of horror which still survives in the verses of the poets of that period: "Among our eagles," says Horace, "the sun beholds, O infamy, the base standard of an Egyptian woman. . . . Romans sold to a woman blush not to bear arms for her. . . . In the intoxication of her success and the madness of her hopes, this monster — *monstrum illud* — dreams the fall of the Capitol, and is preparing with her troops of despicable slaves and eunuchs the funeral rites of the empire." "Thus," writes Propertius, "this royal prostitute — *meretrix regina* — eternal disgrace of the blood of Philip, would force the Tiber to endure the menaces of the Nile, and thrust aside the Roman trumpets to make way for the shrieking sistra (Egyptian timbrels)."¹

Domitius Ænobarbus and C. Sossius were elected consuls 32 B. C. Both were partisans of Antony, and made vain attempts to save him by unmasking Octavius to the senate, but the majority declared against them. Dreading the anger of the implacable Perusian lover of justice they went into exile with several of the senators. They could not at once join Antony, who was in Armenia, negotiating the marriage of his very youthful son, Alexander, with Jotapa, daughter of the

¹ These verses were written after the battle of Actium, 31 B. C., but they no less indicate the sentiments of the Romans at the commencement of the war. If this indignation and hatred obtained with such violence after the victory, what must they have been in the very hour of danger? Lucan says: "This woman, the reproach of Egypt, the fatal Erinyes of Latium, incestuous daughter of the Ptolemies; who made the Capitol tremble with her sistra."

king of Media. They announced to him by letter that Octavius was hastening his preparations, and that immediate hostilities might be expected. Antony, like a good general, determined, in order to get the start of his enemy, to carry the war into Italy. He immediately sent Canidius with sixteen legions to the sea-coast of Asia Minor, and himself proceeded to Ephesus, where all his allies were directed to unite their contingents. Cleopatra was the first to arrive, with two hundred vessels of from three to ten banks of oars, and a war subsidy of twenty thousand talents (one hundred thousand francs).

It would have been better for Antony had this fleet remained in Egyptian waters, this money in the treasury of the Lagidæ, and Cleopatra herself in Alexandria. This bewitching but fatal being brought to the Roman camp her gorgeous licentiousness and her unbridled desire of pleasure. At Ephesus where she landed, at Samos whither they afterwards proceeded, the mad follies of Alexandria were renewed. The constant arrivals of kings, governors, deputations from cities bringing to Antony troops and vessels served as a pretext for magnificent feasts and innumerable dramatic representations. A thousand comedians and rope-dancers were collected, and whilst the whole world, says Plutarch, echoed with the noise of arms and the groans of men, at Samos nothing was heard but laughter and the music of flutes and citharæ. Time passed quickly in these pleasures, and there was not an hour to lose if the offensive were to be taken. Until then the friends and captains of Antony, Del-

lius, Marcus Silanus, Titius, Plancus, all equally yielding to the seductions of Cleopatra, had made no effort to separate their leader from this fatal woman. Now the great game was to be played, and in this game they staked, as it were, their lives against the dominion of the world. They appealed to Antony. Ænobarbus, the only one of the Antonites who had never hailed Cleopatra as queen, was spokesman, and declared plainly that the Egyptian must be sent back to Alexandria till the close of the war. Antony promised to send her. Unfortunately for him, Cleopatra heard of this proceeding. Now less than ever would she leave Antony alone, exposed to the final appeals of Octavia her former successful rival; she knew too well the vacillating mind and weak soul of Antony. Would he have strength to refuse a reconciliation so much desired in the camp as well as at Rome, which would consolidate its threatened power and secure peace to the empire? Cleopatra won over Canidius, after Ænobarbus the most noted captain of the army of the East; and by dint of prayers, coquetry, and money, it is said, she persuaded him to espouse her cause. He represented to Antony that it was neither just nor wise to send away an ally who furnished to the war supplies so considerable; that he would thus alienate the Egyptians, whose ships formed the main strength of the fleet. He added that Cleopatra was, in the council, inferior to none of the kings who were to fight under the orders of Antony; she, who had so long governed alone so great an empire, and who, since they had been associated together, had acquired

still greater experience in affairs. He talked against reason, but he spoke in accordance with the heart of Antony, and Cleopatra remained with the army.

Meanwhile the friends that still remained to Antony in Rome despatched one of their number, Geminus, to make a last attempt to free him from his mistress. Geminus for days tried in vain to see Antony alone. Cleopatra, who suspected the Roman of working in the interests of Octavia, never left her lover for an instant. At length, at the close of a supper, Antony, half-drunk, called upon Geminus to declare instantly the object of his coming. "The matters of which I have to speak," replied Geminus angrily, "cannot be discussed after drinking; but what I can tell you as well drunk as sober is that all would be well if Cleopatra returned to Egypt." In a rage, the queen exclaimed: "You do well to speak before the torture compels it." Antony was no less enraged. The next day Geminus, feeling by no means in safety, reëmbarked for Italy.

The vindictive Egyptian also bore malice against the friends of Antony who had joined with Ænobarbus to procure her departure. Sarcasms, offenses, insults, and ill offices were all employed by her so effectually that Silanus, Delliis (her former lover, it is said), and Plancus and Titius, both persons of consular dignity, abandoned the party of Antony.

As much to revenge themselves on their former leader as to conciliate their new master, Plancus and Titius on their return to Rome revealed to Octavius certain clauses in the will of Antony, the divulging of which would complete his ruin in the minds of the people.

Antony, recognizing Cæsarion as the son of Cæsar, was dividing the Roman East among his other children and the queen of Egypt, and willed that even should he die in Rome, his body should be transported to Alexandria and delivered to Cleopatra. The two officers added that they were positive as to these dispositions, as, at the desire of Antony, they themselves had read the will, had affixed their seal, and had deposited it in the college of the Vestals. Octavius demanded the will. The Vestals declared that they would not give it up, but that if he would come and take it himself they could not prevent him. Octavius felt no scruple in doing so; he took the will and read it before the Senate. The Conscript Fathers, it must be confessed, were no less indignant at the violation of the will of Antony than at the contents of the document itself. Octavius, however, had the excuse of acting for the good of the people. The skillful and patient politician was about to attain his end. He procured also a *senatus-consultum* (a judgment of the Senate), by which Antony was deposed from the consular dignity, and the same day, January 1, 31 B. C., he declared war, not on Antony, but on the queen of Egypt. This was a last tribute to public opinion — Cæsar would not risk the odium of arming Roman against Roman.

He knew well that Antony would not desert Cleopatra, and therefore by conducting his legions against the detested Egyptian, he would throw on Antony the responsibility of the civil war.

Antony and Cleopatra passed at Athens the autumn of 32 and part of the winter of 31 B. C. Whilst their

soldiers were exhausting all the cities of Greece by enormous requisitions, and completing their crews by means of the press-gang, dragging sons from their mothers, and husbands from their wives, the lovers continued to lead their gay life. Spectacles, public games, interminable feasts, and mad orgies incessantly succeeded each other. Jealous of the memory which Octavia had left in Athens, where her beauty was still talked of, Cleopatra would fain have effaced it by her pomp, her flatteries, and her largesses to the people. The Athenians, setting little value on honors, even now somewhat obsolete, which it was in their power to bestow, determined to offer Cleopatra the "Freedom of the City," and decreed that a statue should be erected to her. The decree was presented to her by deputies, among whom figured Antony as an Athenian citizen. The document was read to the queen, after which her virtues and merits were eulogized in an eloquent address. The vanity of Cleopatra was gratified, but her hatred unappeased. She exacted from Antony his repudiation of Octavia, and that from Athens itself, that city where the couple had spent three happy years, he should send to Rome his command for her to depart from his house. Octavia quitted it, clad in mourning and weeping, and leading with her the two children of Antony. The unhappy woman loved him still.¹

¹ It therefore seems probable that it was in the autumn of 32 B. C. that Antony must have married Cleopatra.



VII.

ANTONY had not abandoned his original design of preventing the combining of the forces of Octavius by carrying the war into Italy; but he had lost much time. In the spring of 31, B. C., his army and fleet being concentrated at Actium, at the mouth of the Gulf of Ambracia, he was preparing to join them when he learned that some Roman vessels were coasting the shores of Epirus. It was but the vanguard of Agrippa's fleet, but the presence of this vanguard showed that the preparations of Octavius were in a very advanced state, if not complete. The time for surprising him was past. Antony decided, before forming new plans, to wait till the Romans should have defined their plan of the campaign. The fleet and the army, therefore, remained at Actium, but as the place was unwholesome and a stay there wearisome, Antony went to Patras with Cleopatra. Early in August he received the important news that the Roman fleet had just anchored off the coast of Epirus, that the troops were

landing, and that Octavius was already at Toryne. Antony at once set out for Actium, much excited and very ill pleased that the enemy so quickly and so easily had taken up its position. Cleopatra jested with his uneasiness: "What a misfortune," said she, "that Octavius should be sitting upon a dipper!"—in Greek Toryne means a dipper.

The army of Antony, consisting of nineteen legions and twelve thousand cavalry, and numerous auxiliaries, Cilicians, Paphlagonians, Cappadocians, Jews, Medes, Arabs, amounted to one hundred and ten thousand men. His fleet numbered nearly five hundred vessels of three, five, eight, and ten banks of oars. These last, built in Egypt, were veritable floating fortresses, surmounted with towers and furnished with powerful war-engines. Octavius had eighty thousand foot soldiers recruited in Italy, Sicily, Spain, and Gaul, ten thousand horse, and but two hundred and fifty vessels, triremes with rostra and light Liburnian galleys in about equal numbers. If the land forces were about of equal effective strength the disproportion between the naval forces was immense; but the ships of Octavius made up for their inferiority of numbers by their superiority of manœuvring, and the excellence of their crews, who had all been with Agrippa during the long Sicilian war. On the contrary, Antony's sailors were comparatively few, and most of them were going into battle for the first time; his heavy ships were clumsy in their evolutions,—as the hyperbolical Florus expressed it: "The sea groaned under their weight, and the wind exhausted itself in moving them."

The army of Antony occupied the northern point of Acarnania, with a strong detachment on the coast of Epirus, which was directly opposite. Firmly entrenched within defenses raised during the winter, he commanded the narrow passage into the Gulf of Ambracia in which his fleet was moored. Octavius had pitched his camp in Epirus, at a short distance from the advanced posts of Antony. Antony held an excellent position for defense, which enabled him to resist successfully the attacks of the Romans: for the Pass of Actium could not be forced; but he was blockaded on the side of the sea whence almost all his stores and munitions must reach him.

For several days the two armies were face to face. Octavius, desirous to engage, endeavored by every feint to draw his adversary into action either on land or sea. Antony, uneasy, anxious, hesitating, could not decide what step to take. He embarked the greater portion of his troops and transferred them to the coast of Epirus, as if to attack the Roman camp; then he changed his mind and recrossed into Acarnania. The officers of Antony, auguring ill of the manœuvring qualities of his huge vessels, and, at the same time, full of confidence in the valor of the legionaries, counseled him to fight the battle on land. This was also the desire of the army. At a review he was accosted by an old centurion all seamed with scars: "Oh, Emperor, dost thou distrust these wounds and this sword, that thou puttest thy hope in rotten wood? Let the men of Egypt and Phœnicia fight on the sea, but to us, give us the land where we are used to hold our own, and where

we know how to conquer or to die." But Antony was disturbed by sinister omens. In many places his statues and those of Cleopatra had been struck by lightning; at Alba a marble statue, erected in honor of the triumvir, had been found covered with sweat. "A sign still more alarming," says Plutarch, "some swallows, having built their nests under the stern of the *Antoniad*, Cleopatra's flagship, other swallows came, drove the first away, and killed their young ones." Frequent defeats in the skirmishes around Actium, the desertion of Domitius Ænobarbus, who suddenly passed over to the enemy, the defection of two of the allied kings, who, with their forces, abandoned the army, confirmed these evil omens in the superstitious soul of Antony. He suspected everything and everybody — his fortune, his soldiers, his friends, Cleopatra herself. Seeing her sad, discouraged, a prey to gloomy thoughts — for she, too, dwelt on the omens of the swallows of the *Antoniad* and the shattered statues — he fancied that she wished to poison him, that by this crime she might secure the favor of Octavius. For days he would take neither food nor drink that she had not first tasted. Out of pity for her lover, Cleopatra lent herself willingly to this caprice. One night, however, at the close of the supper, she took a rose from her crown and lightly dipped it into a cup of wine which she handed smilingly to Antony. He put it to his lips, when she arrested his hand and gave the poisoned wine to a slave to drink, who immediately fell to the floor writhing in mortal agony. "O Antony!" exclaimed Cleopatra, "what a woman you suspect. See

read

now that neither means nor opportunities to slay you would fail me if I could live without you!"

The anxiety and depression reached the army, encamped in an unwholesome situation, and with reduced supplies. One day, Canidius himself, hitherto so eager for battle, counseled the abandonment of the fleet, and to carry the war into Thrace, where Dikome, king of the Getae, promised to send reënforcements. But what need was there of reënforcements, since they were already superior in numbers to the enemy? Cleopatra offered another opinion, if no less shameful, at any rate more sensible. Flight against flight, it would be better to go to Egypt than to Thrace. She proposed to leave part of the army in Greece, to garrison the fortified towns; to embark the rest, and set sail for Egypt, passing through the fleet of Octavius. After fresh hesitation, Antony adopted this plan, though assuredly it was bitter to flee from an army whose leader he despised. All tends to the belief, besides, that Antony hoped to destroy the Roman fleet in the naval engagement that must ensue on issuing from the narrow passage of Actium. If he gained the victory he would be able to regain his position and attack the demoralized army of Octavius; if the victory remained doubtful—for with so powerful a fleet he could not admit the supposition of a defeat—he would sail for Egypt. The retreat would be but a last resource.

Desertion and disease had greatly reduced the crews of the galleys. Antony decided to burn one hundred and forty of them in order to fill up with their crews the remainder of the fleet. Twenty-two thousand legion-

aries, auxiliaries, and slingers were put on board the ships. Not to discourage the soldiers and sailors, it was concealed from them that these preparations for battle were indeed preparations for retreat. The secret was so well kept, that it was a surprise to the pilots when they received orders to carry the sails with them. They recollected that in battle the vessels were worked with oars only. Antony had it reported that the sails were carried the better to pursue the enemy after the victory.

On the morning of September 2d the vessels of Antony formed in four grand divisions, crossed the channel of Actium, and, issuing thence, were disposed in battle array opposite the fleet of Octavius, who was awaiting them at eight or ten stadia from the land. On the side of Antony, he himself, with Publicola, commanded the right wing; Marcus Justus and Marcus Octavius the center, and Cœlius the left wing. Cleopatra commanded the reserve with sixty Egyptian vessels. On the side of the Romans, Octavius commanded the right wing, Agrippa the left, and Arruntius the center. About noon the battle began. The troops on land, who were under arms and motionless near the shore, saw not, as is usual in sea-fights, the galleys rush at each other seeking to strike with their rostra or beaks of steel. On account of their slow rate of speed, the heavy vessels of Antony could not strike with that impetuosity which gives force to the shock, and the light galleys of the Romans feared to break their rostra against those enormous ships, constructed of strong beams joined with iron. The battle was like a succes-

sion of sieges, a combat of moving citadels with moving towers. Three or four Roman galleys would unite to attack one of Antony's vessels, so huge, says Virgil, that they looked like the Cyclades sailing on the waters. The soldiers cast grappling-irons, fired burning arrows on the decks, attached fire-ships to the keels, and rushed to board them, while the powerful batteries placed at the summit of the towers of the beleaguered ship showered down on the assailants a hail of stones and arrows. At the very first the Roman right wing, commanded by Octavius, gave way before the attack of the division under Cœlius. At the other extremity Agrippa, having designed a movement to surround Antony and Publicola, these turned on their right and thus uncovered the center of the line of battle. The swift Liburnian galleys improved the opportunity to attack the vessels of the two Marcuses, in the rear of which was the reserve under Cleopatra. Success and reverse went hand in hand; the two sides fought with equal fury, and the victory was doubtful, but the nervousness of Cleopatra was to be the ruin of Antony's cause. For hours she had suffered a fever of agony. From the deck of the *Antoniad* she anxiously watched the movements of the fleets. In the beginning she had hoped for victory; now, terrified by the clamor and tumult, her only desire was to escape. She awaited with ever-increasing impatience the signal for retreat. Suddenly she noticed the right wing moving towards the coast of Epirus, the left putting to sea, and the center, which protected her, attacked, separated, broken, penetrated by the Roman Liburnians. Then,

“pale with her approaching death”—*pallens morte futura*—listening only to her terror, she ordered the sails to be hoisted, and with her sixty vessels she passed through the midst of the combatants and fled towards the open sea. In the midst of the battle Antony perceived the motion of the Egyptian squadron, and recognized the *Antoniad* by its purple sails; Cleopatra was fleeing, robbing him at the decisive moment of his powerful reserve; but the queen could not order the retreat, he alone could give the signal for that. There is some mistake—a feint, perhaps a panic. Antony in his turn hoists the sails of his galley, and rushes in the wake of Cleopatra. He will bring back the Egyptian vessels and restore the chances of the battle. But before overtaking the *Antoniad* the unhappy man has time to think. Cleopatra has deserted him either through cowardice or treason; he can bring back to Actium neither her nor her fleet. Next he thinks he will return to the combat, which is now only a rout, to die with his soldiers—to *die* without seeing Cleopatra once more! he cannot do it. A fatal power drags him after this woman. He reaches the *Antoniad*, but then he is overcome with his disgrace. He refuses to see the queen. He seats himself on the prow of the vessel, his head on his hands, and remains thus for three days and three nights.





VIII.

THE Egyptian fleet and some other vessels which had followed the fugitives put into the port of Cænopolis, near Cape Tenarum. Often repulsed by the obstinate silence of Antony, Cleopatra's women finally succeeded in bringing about an interview between the lovers. They supped and passed the night together. O, wretched human weakness!

Some of his friends who had escaped from Actium brought them news. The fleet had made an obstinate resistance, but all the vessels which were not sunk or burned were now in possession of Octavius. The army still maintained its position, and appeared to be faithful. Antony at once sent messengers and despatched Canidius with orders to recall those troops, and himself embarked for Cyrenaica, where he still had several legions. One of his vessels bore his jewels, his valuables, and all the services of gold and silver which he had used at his entertainments of the kings, his allies. Before departing from Cænopolis, Antony divided all

this wealth among a few of his friends, whom he constrained to seek an asylum in Greece, refusing to allow them any longer to follow his fatal fortunes. When parting from them he talked in the kindest manner, seeking to console them and regarding their tears with a sad but kindly smile.

Cleopatra had sailed from Greece some days before Antony. She was in haste to return to Egypt, fearing that the news of the disaster of Actium might provoke a revolution. To mislead the people for a few days, and thus gain time to take her measures, she entered the port of Alexandria with all the parade of a triumph. Her ships, their prows adorned with crowns, resounded with the songs of victory and the music of flutes and sistra. No sooner was she reinstalled in the palace than she put to death many whose intrigues she feared. These executions, which benefited the royal treasury, for death involved the confiscation of the wealth of the real or pretended guilty, delivered Cleopatra from all fear of an immediate revolution, but she none the less felt a mortal terror about the future. She still suffered from the horror of Actium;—at times haunted by the idea of suicide, she contemplated a death as pompous as had been her life, and she erected at the extremity of Cape Lochias an immense tomb, in which to consume herself and her treasures. At other times she thought of flight, and by her orders a number of her largest ships were transported with great reënforcements of men, engines, and beasts of burden across the isthmus to the Red Sea. She had a vision of embarking with all her wealth for some unknown country of

Asia or Africa, there to renew her existence of lust and pleasure.

Antony soon returned to Alexandria. He was in a state of gloomy discouragement; his army in Acarnania, deserted by Canidius, who had taken flight, had surrendered to Octavius after a week of hesitation; in Cyrenaica he could not even obtain a meeting with his lieutenant Scarpus, who, having taken sides with the Cæsarians, had threatened his life; Herod, his creature, whom he had made king of the Jews, had offered his allegiance to the conqueror of Actium; defection on all sides with his allies as with his legions. Antony reached the point of doubting even Cleopatra; he would scarcely see her. Exasperated at the cruelty of the gods, and still more so at the perfidy of men, he resolved to pass in solitude the wretched days that his enemies might yet permit him to live. The story of Timon, the misanthrope of Athens, which he had heard in happier days, recurred to his memory, and, determined to live like Timon, he settled in the barren mole of Poseidon, and busied himself there in erecting a tower which he intended to call the Timonion.

Cleopatra yielded less submissively to fate. Attacked in the crisis of danger by a fainting courage to which Antony was an utter stranger, the immediate danger past she recovered all her powers. With her exalted imagination she could not despair either wholly or even for very long. She learned that the vessels she had had transported to the Red Sea had been burned by the Arabs, and thus her flight prevented. She at

once prepared for determined resistance. Whilst Antony was losing his time playing the misanthrope, the queen raised fresh forces, furnished new vessels, formed new alliances, repaired the fortifications of Pelusium and Alexandria, distributed arms to the people, and to encourage the Alexandrians to the determined defense of their city, she inscribed the name of her son, Cæsarion, in the rolls of the militia. Antony could not but admire the courage and energy of Cleopatra, and, entreated by his friends besides being weary of his solitude, he resumed his residence at the palace. The queen received him as in the happy days of his return from Cilicia or Armenia. They again enjoyed with the friends of the last hour banquets, festivals, orgies — only “The Inimitables” changed their appellation, and called themselves “The Inseparables in Death”: οἱ συναποθανομένοι.

The choice of this funereal name, assumed as much from resignation as bravado, sufficiently reveals the state of mind of the lovers. Antony, it seems, had lost all hope; Cleopatra still hoped, but with intervals of gloomy discouragement. At such times she would descend to the crypts of the palace, near the prisons of the condemned; slaves would drag them, a few at a time, from their cells to test on them the effects of different poisons. Cleopatra watched with a curiosity, more painful even than cruel, the dying agonies of the victims. The experiments were frequently repeated, for the queen could not discover the poison of her dreams — a poison that slays instantly without pain and without shock. She noticed that violent

poisons killed swiftly but with frightful torture, and that less active ones inflicted lingering agonies; then she studied the bites of serpents, and after new experiments she discovered that the venom of an Egyptian viper, called in Greek "Aspis," caused neither convulsion nor any painful sensation, and led by a constantly increasing drowsiness to a gentle death, like a sleep. As for Antony, like Cato and Brutus, he had his sword.

In the midst of these preparations for defense and for death the vanquished of Actium sought to negotiate with their conqueror. Octavius, recalled to Rome by a threatened sedition of the veterans, had in the course of the winter gone to Syria, where he was concentrating his forces. Antony wrote to him; he reminded him of his former friendship, recalled his services, made excuses for the wrongs he had done, and ended by promising to lay down his arms on condition of being allowed to live as a private citizen at Alexandria. Octavius deigned no reply, nor did he reply to a second letter in which he offered to kill himself, provided that Cleopatra might continue to reign over Egypt. The queen on her side, and unknown to Antony, despatched an envoy to Octavius with rich gifts. Less generous than her lover, who had offered his life to secure her crown, she separated his cause from her own. The Egyptian envoy represented to Octavius that his hatred of Antony ought not to include the queen, who had had no part in the late events. It was Rome, said he, that declared war on Egypt, to bring matters to a close with Antony.

Was not Cleopatra compelled to arm in her own defense? But now that Antony is overcome, compelled to exile or suicide, the Romans may safely show mercy to Cleopatra and leave her on the throne. That is far more to their interest than to force this powerful queen to a desperate struggle.

Octavius already considered himself the master of Egypt—and of the world. He feared but little the broken sword in the hand of Antony, still less the shattered remains of the army of Cleopatra and the wrecks of her navy. But there were two things still beyond his power—all powerful emperor as he was—the immense treasures of Cleopatra, on which he had reckoned to pay his legionaries, and Cleopatra herself, whom he wished to grace his triumph; she might escape the Roman by death and her treasure by fire. Traitors and spies were not lacking in Alexandria; and Octavius knew, through their reports, of the queen's experiments in poisons as well as that she had collected all her treasures in her future tomb. He was compelled to employ cunning with the Egyptian, and, believing himself justified by the words of her ambassador to propose such a step, he declared that if the queen would compass Antony's death she should preserve her sovereignty. Some days after, fearful that this somewhat savage diplomacy might not prevail with Cleopatra, he despatched to her Thyreus, his freedman. In Egypt, Thyreus talked openly before the court and Antony of the resentment of Octavius and of his severe decrees, but having obtained without difficulty a secret audience of Cleo-

patra he told her that he had been charged by his master to repeat his assurances that she had nothing to fear. To satisfy her of this, he pretended to confide to her that she was beloved by Octavius as of old by Cæsar and Antony. Cleopatra had many interviews with Thyreus and publicly showed him much friendliness. Antony took the alarm, and, suspicious of Cleopatra whether as woman or queen, he made use of what power was left him to avenge himself on Thyreus, and in spite of his character as ambassador he had him beaten with rods and sent him back bleeding to his master. The anger of Antony proves that Cleopatra had not listened with inattentive ears to the communications of Thyreus. A woman readily believes this sort of declaration, especially when she has been much beloved. It is true that Cleopatra was then thirty-seven years old, but had she any less confidence in her ever-victorious charms? It is also true that Octavius had never seen her, unless, perhaps, thirteen years before, at Rome, after the death of Cæsar; but did not the universal fame of her attractions suffice to inspire, if not exactly love, at least a vague desire and an ardent and eager curiosity? Cleopatra had loved Antony passionately, but this love had been aroused, strengthened, and exalted as much by the glory and power of the triumvir as by his manly beauty and strength. Now Antony was conquered, a fugitive, betrayed by his friends, deserted by his legions; himself hopeless and dispirited he seemed to bow to his fate. His absurd retreat to the Timonion after the battle of Actium, while she,

seized with a feverish activity, was preparing everything for a final effort, had inspired more scorn than pity in the heart of the queen. Women neither understand nor can they forgive those perilous moments of depression which at certain times overcome the bravest. Little as was the love she still bore Antony, and anxious as she might be about the revelations made by Thyreus, Cleopatra never thought for a moment of having Antony slain, or of giving him up to Octavius; but what, perhaps, she could not help hoping was, that Antony, his life threatened in Alexandria, forsaken by his last legionaries, and having no other than Egyptian troops of doubtful fidelity, would flee into Numidia or Spain and thus deliver her from her embarrassments.

About the middle of the spring of 30 B. C. news reached Alexandria that a Roman army had crossed the western frontier of Egypt. Antony collected a few troops and marched to meet the enemy. A battle was fought beneath the walls of the strong city of Prætonium, which was already in the hands of the Romans. Antony, with his handful of men, was repulsed. When he returned to Alexandria Octavius was within two days' march of the city. Whilst his lieutenant, Cornelius Gallus, was penetrating into Egypt by Cyrenaica he himself had entered through Syria and had taken Pelusium, after a real or feigned resistance, in either case a very brief one. After the surrender of Pelusium, the last of the Romans who had remained faithful to Antony cried out treason, declaring that Seleucus had surrendered the city by

the orders of Cleopatra herself. Is it true that the queen had given such instructions? It may be doubted; nevertheless, Cleopatra's trouble of mind and her secret hopes give a color to these suspicions. To vindicate herself she gave up to Antony the wife and children of Seleucus, and proposed that he should put them to death. This was but a very doubtful proof of her innocence, but Antony had to be satisfied with it. His anger subsided before her protestations and tears, true or false; now was not the time for recriminations: he must fight. Octavius had pitched his camp on the heights about twenty stadia east of Alexandria. Antony, having led in person a strong reconnoitering body of cavalry in that direction, fell in, not far from the Hippodrome, with the whole body of the Roman cavalry. A furious battle was fought in which, notwithstanding their great superiority of numbers, the Romans were broken and utterly routed. Antony pursued them to their entrenchments; then he returned to the city, strengthened by this victory, of little importance indeed, but brilliant and of good augury. He sprang from his horse before the palace, and, without taking time to lay aside his armor, rushed, still wearing helmet and cuirass, and covered with the blood and sweat of the fight, to embrace Cleopatra. She, deceiving herself as to the importance of this skirmish, felt her love and her hopes at the same time revive. She had again found her Antony, her emperor, her god of war. She threw herself passionately on his neck, wounding her breasts against his cuirass. At this moment of sincere

feeling she must have reproached herself grievously (if she had committed it) with the treason of Pelusium; and the confidences which she had accepted from the envoy of Octavius must have recurred to her as a bitter remorse. Cleopatra desired to review the troops. She made them a speech, and, having had the bravest of them pointed out to her, she gave him a complete armor of solid gold.

Antony, restored to hope, no longer contemplated negotiating, and the same day sent a herald to Octavius to invite him to decide their quarrel by single combat in sight of the two armies. Octavius replied disdainfully that there was more than one other way for Antony to seek death. This speech, that marked so great assurance in his enemy, struck Antony as a fatal omen. Suddenly, dashed from his chimerical hopes, he felt his situation in all its gloomy reality. Resolved, nevertheless, the next day to fight one last battle, he ordered a sumptuous feast. "To-morrow," said he, "it will, perhaps, be too late!" The supper was sad as a funeral banquet; the few friends that were faithful to him maintained a gloomy silence, some even wept. Antony, simulating a confidence which he did not feel, said to them to revive their sinking spirits: "Think not that to-morrow I shall only seek a glorious death; I shall fight for life and victory." At daybreak, while the troops were taking up their position before the Roman camp, and the Egyptian fleet, which was to support the action by attacking that of Octavius, was doubling Cape Lochias, Antony posted himself on an eminence whence he commanded both the plain and the

sea. The Egyptian vessels advanced in battle array against the Roman Liburnians, but, when within two arrow-flights, the rowers raised high in air their long oars in salute. The salute was returned by the Romans, and immediately the two fleets, mingling and making now but one, sailed into the port together. Almost at the same moment Antony sees his cavalry,—that cavalry which the day previous had fought with such intrepidity,—move without orders and pass over to Octavius. In the Roman lines the trumpets sounded the onset; the legions dashed forward with their accustomed war-cry: “*Comminus! Comminus!*” (Hand-to-hand!) The infantry of Antony did not wait the shock—it broke and rushed towards the city, dragging their leader in the midst of the rout. Antony, mad with rage, uttering threats and curses, striking the fugitives indifferently with the blade and the flat of his sword, re-entered Alexandria exclaiming that he was betrayed by Cleopatra, given up by this woman to those with whom he had fought solely for love of her.

Cleopatra had no longer the power either to betray or to save Antony; for she, the “New Goddess,” the “Queen of Kings,” she, too, was abandoned by her people, as he, the great captain, was deserted by his army. Their cause was lost, who would be faithful to it? During the preceding day and night, Octavius’s emissaries had worked upon the legionaries and the Egyptians, promising to the former amnesty, to the latter safety. The valiant soldier on whom Cleopatra the day before had bestowed the golden suit of armor had not even waited for the morning to pass into

the Roman camp; that very night he had deserted! At the sight of the fugitives rushing like a torrent into the city, Cleopatra is overcome with terror. She is aware of the suspicions of Antony, she knows his terrible fits of rage. Already she is familiar with the idea of death, but she desires a more easy death, a death the sister of sleep. She shudders and revolts at the thought of Antony's sword; she has a vision of hideous wounds in her person, her breast, perhaps her face. As for attempting to calm his fury, she has neither strength nor courage for that. Desperate, she quits the palace with Iras and Charmion, and withdraws to her tomb, of which she has the door closed; and, to prevent Antony's attempting to force this refuge, she gives orders to tell him she is no more.¹

Antony, rushing like a madman about the deserted apartments of the palace, learns the news. His anger dissolves in tears: "What more have you to expect, Antony?" exclaimed he, "Fortune robs you of the only blessing which made life dear." He commands his freedman Eros to slay him; then, unfastening his cuirass, he addresses this last adieu to Cleopatra: "O, Cleopatra! I do not complain that thou art taken from me, since in a moment I shall rejoin thee." Eros, meanwhile, has drawn his sword, but instead of striking

¹ Dion says that Cleopatra betrayed Antony at Alexandria, as at Pelusium, and that she sent him word of her death that he might be urged to commit suicide, and his body given up to Octavius. Once for all, we take for authority Plutarch, who seems much more worthy of credit. The taking of Alexandria was on August 1, 30 B. C.

Antony, he stabs himself. "Brave Eros," said Antony, seeing him fall dead at his feet, "you set me the example !" and, thrusting the sword into his breast, he sinks fainting upon a couch.

In a few minutes he recovers consciousness. He calls and entreats the slaves, the soldiers, to put an end to him, but none dare to comply, and he is left alone, howling and struggling on the couch. Meanwhile the queen has been informed of the fact. Her grief is bitter and profound — the more bitter that it is mingled with remorse. She must see Antony again ; she commands that he be brought, dead or alive. Diomedes, her secretary, hastens to the palace. Antony is at the last gasp, but the joy at hearing that the queen is not dead revives him, and "he rises," says Dion Cassius, "as if he might still live !" Slaves bear him in their arms, and, to hasten their movements, he utters entreaties, invectives, threats, which mingle with the death-rattle. They reach the tomb ; the queen leans from a window of the upper story ; fearing a surprise, she will not have the portcullis raised, but she throws down some ropes, and commands them to be fastened round Antony. Then, aided by Iras and Charmion, the only ones she has allowed to enter the mausoleum, she begins to drag him up. "It was not easy," says Plutarch, "for women thus to lift a man of Antony's size." Never, say those who witnessed it, was a sadder or more pitiful sight. Cleopatra, with arms stiff and brow contracted, dragged painfully at the ropes, whilst Antony, bleeding and dying, raised himself as much as possible, extending towards her his dying hands.

At last he reached her, and they laid him on a bed, where she long held him in a close embrace. Her grief spent itself in tears, in sobs, in despairing kisses. She called him her husband, her master, her emperor; she struck her breast, tore it with her nails, then again casting herself upon him, she kissed his wound, wiping off on her face the blood that flowed from it. Antony endeavored to calm and console her, and entreated her to care for her own safety. Burning with fever, he begged for a drink, and swallowed a cup of wine. Death was rapidly approaching. Cleopatra renewed her lamentations. "Do not grieve," said he, "for this last misfortune; rather congratulate me for the blessings I have enjoyed in my life, and the happiness that has been mine in being the most powerful and illustrious of men; congratulate me on this, that, being a Roman, none but a Roman has conquered me." He expired in the arms of Cleopatra, dying, as Shakspeare says, where he had wished to live.

When Octavius heard of Antony's death, he despatched Proculeius and Gallus with orders to seize Cleopatra before she could have time to kill herself. Their calls attracted the attention of the queen; she descended and began to parley with them from behind the portcullis. Deaf to the promises and protestations of the two Romans, Cleopatra declared that she would only surrender if Octavius would agree by oath to maintain her or her son on the throne of Egypt; otherwise Cæsar should have but her dead body. Proculeius, espying the window which had admitted Antony, left his companion to converse alone with the

queen, and, finding a ladder, placed it against the thick wall, and thus entering the tomb, he descended the staircase within and sprang upon Cleopatra. Charmion, turning at the noise, exclaimed: "Unhappy queen, thou art taken alive!" Cleopatra snatched from her girdle a dagger which for some time she had carried in order to kill herself, but Proculeius seized her wrist and only allowed her to free herself after being assured that she had no other weapon and no suspicious phial about her. He then resumed the respectful attitude demanded by the rank and misfortunes of the royal captive. He assured her she had nothing to fear from Octavius. "O, Queen," said he, "you are unjust towards Cæsar, whom you would rob of the noblest opportunity of exercising clemency."

Her treasures and her person in the power of the Romans, Cleopatra felt herself without the means of defense. What availed it that Cæsar left her her life, since henceforth she desired only to die? The only favor she asked was to be allowed to pay funeral honors to Antony. Although the same request had already been made by the captains of his army who had served under Antony, Octavius, touched with compassion, granted the prayer of the Egyptian. Cleopatra bathed the body of her lover, adorned and armed it as for a last battle, then she laid it in the tomb which she had built for herself and in which she had vainly sought death. After the obsequies the queen was conducted, by order of Octavius, to the palace of the Lagidæ. There she was treated with every attention, but she was, so to speak, never lost sight of (a prisoner forever watched).

The terrible emotions through which Cleopatra had passed, the intense grief which overwhelmed her, above all the wounds she had inflicted on herself during the death-struggle of Antony, brought on an inflammation of the chest, attended by a burning fever. In this illness she saw the hoped-for death, and to hasten her deliverance she refused for many days all medical treatment and all food. Octavius was informed of this, and he sent her word that she must have forgotten that he held her four children as hostages, and that their lives should answer for hers. This horrid threat overcame the resolution of Cleopatra, who then consented to be properly cared for.

Octavius meanwhile felt he had cause for disquiet. What if the pride of the queen overpowered her motherly instincts? what if the horror of gracing as a captive his approaching triumph should decide her to a self-inflicted death? Doubtless she was well guarded, but what negligence or what treason might he not fear? Besides, though without arms or poison, might she not induce the faithful Charmion to strangle her? "Now Octavius," so says Dion Cassius, "conceived that the death of Cleopatra would have robbed him of his glory." He resolved, therefore, to see her. He knew he possessed sufficient self-control not to become entangled, and believed himself sufficiently skillful to keep the queen uncertain of the fate to which he destined her.

Cleopatra was no longer deceived as to the pretended sentiments of love with which, according to Thyreus, she had inspired Octavius; of this we are

assured by Plutarch. Since the emperor's arrival in Alexandria he had not even expressed the intention of seeing her, and the harsh treatment, the rigorous seclusion, and the savage threats which she had to endure from him did not certainly indicate a man in love. Can it be said, however, that the prospect of the unexpected visit of Octavius aroused in Cleopatra, desperate as she was, no glimpse of hope, no fugitive vision of a throne, no last enthusiasm? that from her beautiful eyes shot no ray of half-seen triumph?

The queen, scarcely convalescent, was in bed when Octavius entered. She sprang from the couch, though wearing only a tunic, and knelt before him. At the sight of this woman, worn out by fever, emaciated, dreadfully pale, with drawn features, eyes sunken and red with tears, bearing on her face and breast the marks made by her own hands, Octavius found it hard to believe that this was the enchantress that had captivated Cæsar and enslaved Mark Antony; but had Cleopatra been more beautiful than Venus he would not have been her lover. Continence was not among his virtues, but he was too prudent and too clever ever to sacrifice his interests to his passions. He urged the queen to return to her couch, and seated himself near her. Cleopatra began to vindicate herself, referring all that had passed to the force of circumstances and the fear she felt of Antony. She often ceased speaking, interrupted by her choking sobs; then, in the hope of moving Octavius to pity (of seducing him, some

say), she drew from her bosom some of Cæsar's letters, kissed them, and exclaimed: "Wouldst thou know how thy father loved me, read these letters . . . Oh! Cæsar! why did I not die before thee! . . . but for me you live again in this man!" and through her tears she essayed to smile at Octavius. Lamentable scene of coquetry, which the wretched woman no longer could or knew how to play.

To her sighs, her moans, the emperor made no reply, even avoiding looking at her and keeping his eyes fixed on the floor. He spoke only to reply, one by one, to all the arguments by which the queen sought to justify herself. Chilled by the impassibility of this man, who, without being at all moved by her misfortunes and her sufferings, was arguing with her like a schoolmaster, Cleopatra felt that she had nothing to hope. Again death appeared as the only liberator. Then she ceased her pleas, dried her tears, and, in order completely to deceive Octavius, she pretended to be resigned to everything, provided her life was spared. She handed him the list of her treasures, and entreated him to permit her to retain certain jewels that she might present them herself to Livia and Octavia in order to secure their protection. "Take courage, O woman!" said the emperor as he left her. "Be hopeful; no harm shall happen to you!"

Deceived by the pretended resignation of Cleopatra, Octavius no longer doubted that he would be able to exhibit to the Roman rabble the haughty queen of Egypt walking in chains before his tri-

umphal car. He had not heard, as he left her, the last word uttered by Cleopatra, that word which, since the taking of Alexandria, she had incessantly repeated: *Οὐ θριαμβεύσομαι!* "I will not contribute to his triumph."¹

A few days after this interview, an intimate companion of Octavius, taking pity on such dire reverses, secretly revealed to Cleopatra that the next day she would be embarked for Rome. She asked to be allowed to go with her women to offer libations at the tomb of Antony. She was borne thither in a litter, being still too weak to walk. After pouring the wine and adjusting the crowns she kissed for the last time the sepulchral stone, saying: "O, beloved Antony, if thy gods have any power—for mine have betrayed me—do not abandon thy living wife. Do not let thyself be triumphed over, by making her at Rome take part in a disgraceful show. Hide me with thee under this earth of Egypt."

On her return, Cleopatra went to the bath; her women arrayed her in her most magnificent robes, dressed her hair with care, and adjusted her royal crown. Cleopatra had ordered a splendid repast; her toilet ended, she was placed at the table. A countryman entered, carrying a basket. A soldier of the guard desiring to see the contents, the man opened it and showed some figs; and, the guard exclaiming at the beauty of them, he offered them some to taste. His

¹ The peculiar force of this verb in the passive form cannot be fitly rendered in a translation. It is, word for word, "I will not be triumphed."

good nature lulled all suspicion; he was allowed to pass. Cleopatra received the basket, sent to Octavius a letter she had written in the morning, and was then left alone with Iras and Charmion. She opened the basket and separated the figs, hoping to be stung unawares, but the reptile was asleep. Cleopatra discovered it beneath the figs. "There it is, then!" cried she, and began to rouse it with a golden pin. The asp bit her on the arm.

Warned by the letter of Cleopatra, Octavius sent in haste to the apartments. His officers found the guards at their post, ignorant of what had occurred. They forced the door and beheld Cleopatra, clad in her royal robes, lying lifeless on her golden couch, and at her feet the corpse of Iras. Charmion was still alive; leaning over Cleopatra, she was arranging with her dying hands the diadem around the head of the queen. A soldier exclaimed in a voice of wrath: "Is this well done, Charmion?" "Yes," said the dying Charmion, "it is well done, and worthy of a queen, the descendant of so many kings!"

Octavius put to death Cæsarion, the son of Cæsar and Cleopatra, but he was merciful to the dead body of the queen. Granting the mournful prayer she had made to him in her last letter, he permitted her to be buried beside Antony. He also granted honorable burial to the faithful slaves, Charmion and Iras, who had accompanied their mistress to the world of shadows.

By her suicide, Cleopatra escaped contributing to the triumph of Octavius,¹ but failing her person he had

¹ Cleopatra died the 15th of August, 30 B. C.

her effigy, and the statue of Cleopatra with a serpent wound about her arm was borne in the triumphal procession. Does it not seem that the statue of this illustrious queen, who had subdued the greatest of the Romans, who had made Rome tremble, and who preferred death to assisting at her own humiliation, had by her death triumphed over her conqueror, and still defied the senate and the people on the way to the Capitol?

We can easily conceive of Cleopatra as a great queen, the rival of the mythic Semiramis, and the elder sister of the Zenobias, the Isabellas, the Maria-Theresas, and the Catharines; but, in truth, only those queens are great who possess manly virtues, who rule nations and compel events as a great king might do. Cleopatra was too essentially a woman to be reckoned among these glorious androgynuses. If for twenty years she preserved her throne and maintained the independence of Egypt, it was done by mere womanly means — intrigue, gallantry, grace, and weakness which is also a grace. Her sole method of governing was, in reality, by becoming the mistress of Cæsar and the mistress of Mark Antony. It was the Roman sword that sustained the throne of the Lagidæ. When by the fault of Cleopatra the weapon was broken, the throne tottered and fell. Ambition, her only royal virtue, would have been limited to the exercise of her hereditary government if circumstances had not developed and exalted it.

Knowing herself weak, without genius and without mental force, she reckoned wholly on her lovers for the

C.B.

accomplishment of her designs, and it too often happened to this woman, fatal to others as to herself, to retard the execution of these, dominated, as she ever was, by the imperious desire of some entertainment or some pleasure. This queen had the recklessness of the courtesan; women of gallantry might have considered her their august and tragic ancestress. She only lived for love, pomp, and magnificence; wherefore, when her lover was slain, her beauty marred, her wealth lost, and her crown shattered, she found, to face death, the masculine courage which had failed her in life.

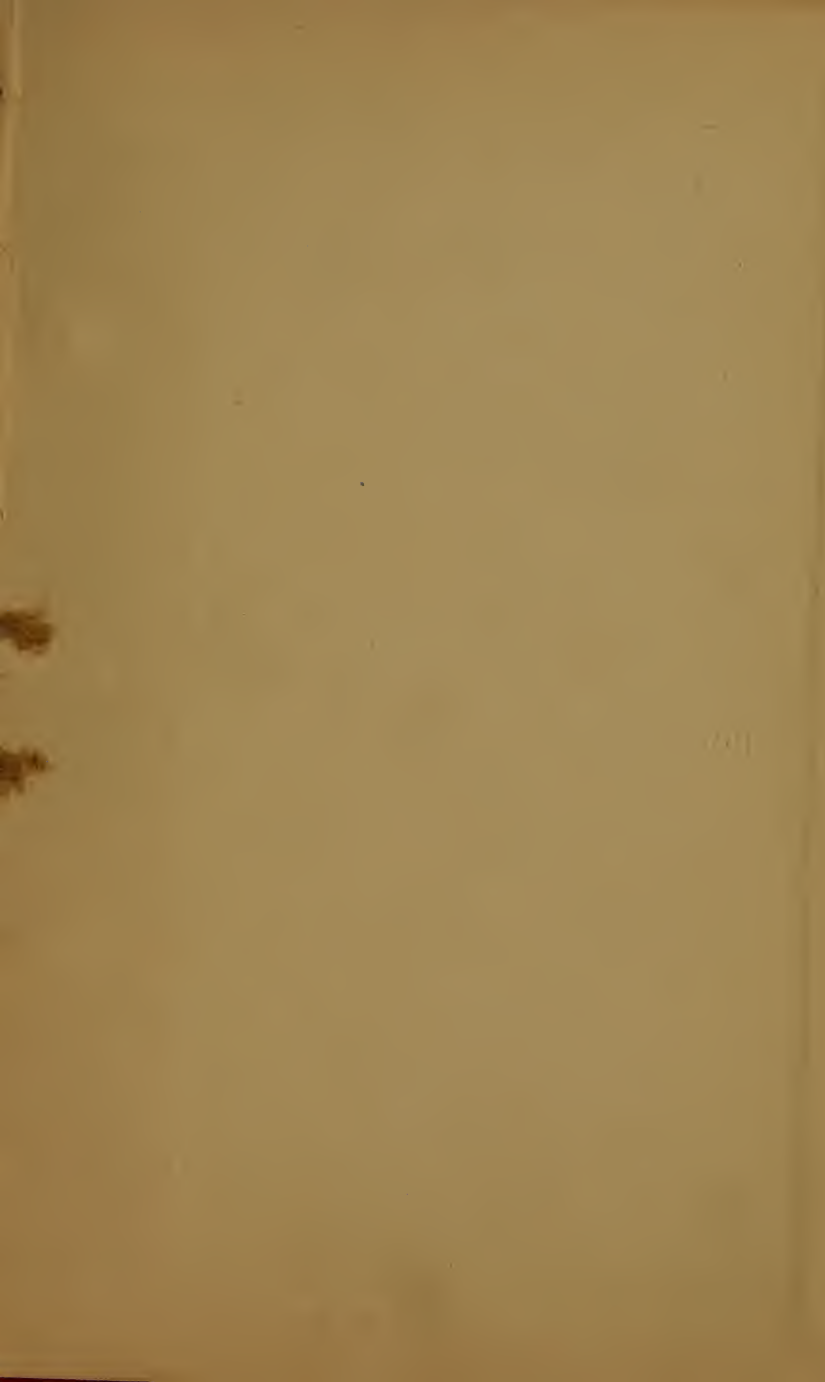
No, Cleopatra was not a great queen. But for her connection with Antony, she would be forgotten with Arsinoë or Berenice. If her renown is immortal, it is because she is the heroine of the most dramatic love-story of antiquity.





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